

Monday January 12 1998

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Albania US 2
Andorra FF 16
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Belgium BF 10
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Czech Republic KC 50
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France FF 12
Germany DM 3.00
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Hungary H 200
Ireland IR 1.50
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Japan J 1.25
Korea KR 2.50
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Talk of the town

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Row over psychiatrists who destroy lives

Rory Carroll

PSYCHIATRISTS have launched a devastating attack on colleagues who use bogus techniques to plant false memories of sexual abuse in patients, according to an unpublished report which was delayed for more than a year because therapists feared its criticisms.

A copy obtained by the Guardian shows that the inquiry commissioned by the Royal College of Psychiatrists has concluded that any memory recovered through hypnosis, dream

interpretation or regression therapy is almost certainly false.

It blames these "dangerous and powerful tools for persuasion" for spawning hundreds of false accusations against parents, destroying families and undermining the credibility of genuine abuse victims.

Mistaken diagnoses have made patients more likely to feel suicidal and to engage in self-mutilation.

Sydney Brandon, chairman of the report's working party, said the General Medical Council should respond to complaints from patients by striking off psy-

chiatrists who persist in using the techniques.

He urged colleagues to review their notes and if necessary contact patients who believed their recovered memories.

The report's key finding is that people do not bury memories of abuse. On the contrary, their problem is that they can not forget.

"Despite widespread clinical and popular belief that memories can be 'blocked out' by the mind, no empirical evidence exists to support either repression or dissociation.

"No evidence exists for the repression and recovery of verified, sev-

erely traumatic events, and their role in symptom formation has yet to be proved."

False memories tend to date the abuse from an earlier age than genuine cases, often when the person was an infant.

A book regarded as seminal by some mental health professionals, *The Courage To Heal*, is branded "irresponsible" for attributing almost all adult psychiatric problems to forgotten sexual abuse.

"The very inability to recall abuse is taken as a sign that abuse has occurred but is being 'denied' through the process of repression.

The therapist and patient embark together upon the process of recovering hidden memories."

Therapists are also criticised for using all-embracing symptom checklists — such as headaches, celiac, promiscuity and wearing baggy clothes — that exclude few people.

Entitled *Recovered Memories of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Implications for Clinical Practice*, the original report was submitted to the Royal College of Psychiatrists in the summer of 1996.

Its hard-hitting findings appalled some College members, who lobbied for

it to be disowned. A compromise was agreed whereby watered-down guidelines were issued last October, but the report itself would no longer be published under the imprimatur of the College.

Dr R E Kendall, the College president, confirmed that a revised version will appear as an article in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* in April, thus distancing the College from controversy.

A survey of College members revealed that one in five had attempted to recover memories of forgotten abuse, one in six accepted the use of check-

lists to diagnose repressed abuse, and one in 10 recommended *The Courage To Heal* to patients.

The report's four authors damn so-called memory enhancement techniques, including:

□ Drug induced abracations: "Produce material which is often a product of fantasy."

□ Hypnosis: "Increases the confidence with which the memory is held while reducing its reliability."

□ Age regression: "Accounts are at times so fantastic that they are beyond belief and there is no evidence of [its] efficacy."

□ Dream interpretations:

"Usually reflect the trailling and personal convictions of the therapist."

Freud pioneered the belief that adult neurosis was caused by childhood abuse buried in the mind because it was too painful to confront.

The phenomenon of adults recovering apparent memories during therapy started in the United States during the 1980s and spread to Britain in the early 1990s. Some American patients retracted their memories and successfully sued their therapists.

Phoney abuse leaves multiple scars, page 3

Labour to end welfare taboos

Ewen MacAskill in Tokyo and Michael White

FUNDAMENTAL changes in key state benefits to direct extra resources towards the poor at the likely expense of the affluent were signalled by Tony Blair yesterday as he announced the launch of a nationwide crusade to sell his reform of the welfare system.

Richer pensioners may not automatically get the basic state pension, child benefit for the better-off might be taxed, and highly paid mothers could cease to be entitled to state subsidised maternity pay in order to extend it to the low paid.

Undeterred by last month's backlash revolt over the cut in single-parent benefit, Mr Blair used a TV broadcast from Tokyo to underline the fact that ministers intend to "drive through" a strategic reform programme which will help society's poorest, not harm them.

Starting on Thursday in Birmingham, he plans a series of "welfare roadshows" to win over party activists and persuade voters that reform is necessary and that

the present £96 billion a year system is unfair and inefficient.

Without drastic reform it will cost £106-107 billion by 2002, ministers predict.

The Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, echoed Mr Blair's approach when she signalled a drive to direct benefits to the people who need them most.

She focused on statutory maternity pay, saying that in five women at work receive no statutory maternity pay when they become pregnant.

"And yet, for the most highly paid women, there's no ceiling on the amount they get, and in one case, if you earn £1 million a year you can actually get £18,000 a week from the social security system."

Turning the language of means-testing inside-out, she argued that better-off recipients could be subjected to an "affluence test" — and lose some traditional so-called universal benefits, previously paid to everyone regardless of income, if they earn above a certain level. High on such a list will be the key universal benefits, like the basic state pension, child benefit and state maternity pay.

Interviewed for BBC's *Breakfast with Frost* in Tokyo, where he is halfway through a five-day visit, Mr Blair was asked whether he planned less government provision for state pensions.

He said people were already providing for themselves privately. "If all the Government does is simply increase the amount of money of the basic pension, many of the poorest don't benefit from that at all. So we have to look at ways in which we can make sure that we are getting help to those people that really need it most in the system."

Ministers are desperate for an informed public debate, free of what they regard as "scare stories" whipped up by MPs, the media or anti-pov-

turn to page 2, column 3



The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, at Edinburgh airport yesterday with Gaynor Regan whom he said he plans to marry. Cook plans divorce, page 2

PHOTOGRAPH: JEFF MITCHELL

Party broadcasts face the axe

Call to limit airtime to election campaigns

Kamel Ahmed
Media Correspondent

THE party political broadcast, a mainstay of British television democracy since the 1950s, is to be axed under controversial plans to be published by the BBC and ITV this week.

In a consultation paper expected to be released tomorrow, broadcasters will say that political parties should lose their right to the five- and 10-minute "peace time" broadcasts before the BBC's *Nine O'Clock News* and ITV's *News at Ten*.

They will also demand that the political parties forfeit airtime allocated to them following the Budget, and that party election broadcasts, allowed during campaigns, should be no longer than three or four minutes rather than the present five or 10 minutes.

The proposals come after television executives expressed concern that viewers are becoming increasingly bored with politics and take

On message

The rules governing the number of party political broadcasts shown by the BBC and ITV are laid down by the BBC's Charter and the Broadcasting Act of 1990. They are based on the number of votes, seats and candidates each party has.

The present split is:	
Lab	5
Con	5
LibDem	1
Disputed: 5 or 10 minutes	

the chance during the broadcasts to switch off the television and switch on the kettle.

"There are just too many on the television now," said one executive. "It will help both sides if the broadcasts are only allowed during election time, when people's minds are more focused on politics."

Broadcasters argue that the Budget is given so much television and newspaper coverage now that the separate Budget broadcasts have become irrelevant.

They are also concerned that declining ratings for the key news programmes are ex-

acerbated if a bulletin follows a party political broadcast.

But political parties are worried that the end of FPBs, which can cost up to £2 million each to make, will give them less opportunity to get their message across.

"All the political parties are conscious of the fact that the turn-off rate is quite high during political broadcasts, but we think there has to be a degree of flexibility," said a Labour source.

"Shorter broadcasts mean that the message has to be simpler and that often means a negative message. We do

not want to disappear down the American route of 30-second soundbites attacking the opponent."

The Liberal Democrats are worried that they will be particularly disadvantaged by the changes.

During political "peace time," when there are no national, local or European elections, Labour and the Conservatives are allowed five party political broadcasts each year and the Liberal Democrats three.

But broadcasters point out that when there are elections the number can easily double.

During 1997, Labour and the Conservatives were allowed 10 broadcasts each — five party political broadcasts and five party election broadcasts during the general election campaign. The Liberal Democrats were allowed seven.

In 1999, with European elections, elections for the Scottish parliament and the Welsh assembly and English local elections, the number under present rules will creep up towards the 30 mark.

In some years, the parties are offered so many slots that they do not take their full allocation.

The parties will have two months to respond to the proposals before a final decision is taken by the broadcasting authorities.

Many people are aware of the challenging issues raised by closer European union, but few profess to have understood the full implications of those challenges.

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Inside

Britain

Labour's new welfare roadshows will aim to win over party activists and persuade voters that reform is necessary and that the present £96 billion a year system is unfair and inefficient.

World News

The party political broadcast, a mainstay of British television democracy since the 1950s, is to be axed under controversial plans to be published by the BBC and ITV this week.

Finance

Broadcasters will say that political parties should lose their right to the five- and 10-minute "peace time" broadcasts before the BBC's *Nine O'Clock News* and ITV's *News at Ten*.

Sport

Manchester United retained their seven-point lead in the Premiership when they beat Blackburn 3-1 in their last game.

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PM optimistic despite latest sectarian killing □ Leaked blueprint for settlement angers nationalists

Blair in push for Ulster deal

John Mullan in Belfast and Ewen MacAskill in Tokyo

TONY Blair was remorselessly upbeat about the chances for a settlement in Northern Ireland yesterday, despite nationalist anger over his leaked blueprint for a political solution and another sectarian murder of a Catholic.

The Prime Minister, whose template for Northern Ireland's future draws heavily on Ulster Unionist proposals, said in Japan that the "basic elements of the peace settlement are there". There were few in Northern Ireland who could see any grounds for such optimism.

His leaked plan calls for a Northern Ireland assembly, unspecified cross-border links, and a so-called council

of the isles. Its effect is to effectively downplay the relationships between Northern Ireland and the Republic fundamental to any nationalist agreement.

As the stymied multi-party negotiations resume today, the Irish government, SDLP and Sinn Féin were all furious over the Blair proposals. The Government has not denied the contents.

The Irish government fears the move could hinder progress in the faltering peace process. Some officials believe the Prime Minister reneged on promises to agree a formula with it before unveiling his attempt to push talks forward. A frantic weekend of telephone calls has failed to repair the damage.

The SDLP is unhappy because it sees the leak as a kite-flying exercise. "Negotiations should be at Stormont,

not in the media," said Mark Durkan, an SDLP negotiator. Republicans believe the Government has shifted its position towards the Unionists because of recent loyalist terrorism.

The Progressive Unionist Party, the fringe loyalist group, said last night it would be attending Stormont today. It had threatened to withdraw over what it saw as the republican agenda of the talks.

The resumption of talks was overshadowed when the renegade Loyalist Volunteer Force murdered doorman Terry Enright early yesterday outside a Belfast club. He was the LVF's third victim since the killing of its leader, Billy Wright, 16 days ago.

Mr Enright, a father of two, was linked to both Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, and David Ervine, leader of the DUP. It is unlikely Mr En-

right's killers would have known that Mr Adams was his wife's uncle. But they would have been aware that relatives of Mr Ervine own the city centre nightclub where he was working.

Mr Ervine believed the club was targeted to undermine his conciliatory approach. He said: "A fine young man has lost his life caused by an obscure group of headcases receiving political direction from anonymous but seemingly respectable politicians intending to damage my political philosophies and attitude."

Detectors also know that Mr Enright had refused entry to two loyalists suspected of drugs dealing. They had subsequently threatened him. Eye witnesses said Mr Enright was singled out and was shot several times.

He worked with both Catholic and Protestant youngsters,

and one of his friends was the DUP's Billy Hutchinson, also a community worker. Mr Hutchinson said: "I am gutted. I'm just at rock bottom."

Deirdre Enright, the victim's widow, said: "The gutless cowards who gunned him down killed someone very special. Unlike them, Terry was working tirelessly for many years to bring about peace, community harmony and a better life for all, especially young people."

There were suggestions last night that the Ulster Freedom Fighters, suspected over the New Year's Eve killing of Eddie Treanor, were involved. The paramilitary group's leaders in the Maze met with Mo Mowlam, the Ulster Secretary, three days ago.

The car used in the attack on Mr Enright was found burned out in loyalist east Belfast in a stronghold of the

Ulster Defence Association and UFF.

Amid such gloom, Mr Blair said he was "cautious and optimistic that we can get a proper settlement in Northern Ireland because I believe there is much goodwill there."

His blueprint is a reformulation of the Framework Document, unveiled by both governments as a basis for discussion in 1995. Under his scheme cross-border bodies seem unlikely to have the all-important executive powers.

The council of the isles would involve representation from the assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and ministerial involvement from Westminster and Dublin. It is an Ulster Unionist suggestion which effectively downgrades the importance of the north-south links.

Gentle giant, page 4

Margaret Cook exercises her horse yesterday

Cook plans swift divorce and marriage to secretary

Michael White and Ewen MacAskill in Tokyo

ROBIN Cook, the Foreign Secretary, plans to marry his secretary Gaynor Regan as soon as his divorce from his wife of 28 years is finalised, he said last night.

"The only relationship I have is with the woman I love and with the woman I will marry. And I am going to get married as soon as I get divorced," Mr Cook told reporters at Edinburgh airport. He was accompanied by Mrs Regan.

It emerged yesterday that Mrs Regan has moved into the Foreign Secretary's official London residence at Carlton Gardens and has spent time at Chevening, his grace-and-favour mansion in Kent.

Mr Cook's announcement came after Tony Blair yesterday insisted that the Foreign Secretary was doing "a tremendous job" on the world stage, and vowed not to allow the personal troubles of Cabinet colleagues to divert the Government from key tasks.

Colleagues regard Mr Cook's renewed embarrassment over the break-up of his marriage, and relationship with Mrs Regan, his Commons secretary, as the last twitch of an old story. It was revived when his estranged wife, Margaret, gave an interview to accompany yesterday's Westminster Women programme on ITV.

She complained about her husband's "super-ego" and previous affairs. Sunday newspapers revealed that Mrs Regan is being granted officially-recognised status by the Foreign Office and will accompany him on official functions.

Margaret Cook said last night that her husband had not warned her in advance that he was going to declare publicly that they are to be divorced — or that he intends to marry Mrs Regan.

Mr Blair rallied behind his Foreign Secretary after some Conservatives — including Mr Cook's Tory shadow, Michael Howard — renewed

charges of hypocrisy and claims that he would now prove a lame-duck minister.

But even the Prime Minister expressed his determination to avoid John Major's experience of ministerial squabbles and scandals, he was forced to dismiss as "codswallop" weekend reports that, before John Smith's death, he had reneged on a promise to stand aside in favour of Gordon Brown in any future leadership contest.

Describing Mr Brown as one of his closest friends, Mr Blair claimed that when Mr Smith was leader, both he and Mr Brown had been concentrating on winning the general election, not on who would be the next leader, as claimed in a biography of the Chancellor.

He admitted on BBC's Breakfast with Frost that it was maddening to have visits such as his five-day trip to Japan overshadowed by such matters as Mr Cook's love life. "You just get used to it and there is no point in crying over it," he said.

The Prime Minister was fulsome in his praise of Mr Cook, saying the Foreign Secretary's domestic problems would not affect his professional ability. "On the international stage, he has made a huge reputation for himself."

He told Sir David Frost: "You can either sit there and worry about these things all the time. I mean 10 days ago you would have asked me about Jack Straw before you asked about anything else. But these things come up, they are often very difficult, but when I say concentrate on the big picture, I mean that."

He said Mr Straw had handled "superbly" the allegations that his son had dealt in cannabis.

The individual troubles of ministers were a problem, he admitted. "My attitude nowadays is that I don't get hung up on the next day's newspapers and that headline or that headline. I am concentrating all the time on the things that I think really matter to people."

The Pope is supported by his master of ceremonies, Piero Marini, yesterday after appearing close to collapse at the start of a service in the Sistine Chapel PHOTOGRAPH BY AP TELEVISION

Vatican says Cuba tried to bug Pope on historic visit

John Hooper in Rome

CHURCH officials preparing for Pope John Paul II's historic visit to Cuba later this month found a listening device hidden in one of the buildings the pontiff is due to visit, Vatican sources said at the weekend.

The Pope's spokesman

would neither confirm nor deny the discovery of the "bug". "We do not comment on such reports," said Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

The device is understood to have been discovered about two months ago in one of the provincial towns on the pontiff's itinerary. He is scheduled to make stops at Santa Clara, Camaguey and Santiago de Cuba.

Because of his delicate health and fading stamina, the Pope is expected to rest for several hours in each town before returning to Havana to spend the night at the papal nuncio's residence. When the listening device was found, however, his itinerary had not been fixed and it was thought he might spend a night outside the capital.

The Vatican complained vigorously to the Cuban authorities, which acknowledged the existence of the "bug" but said it had been planted before Fidel Castro's regime took power on the island in 1959. The Vatican's consultants said the device was of recent design and similar to one found two years ago in the apostolic nunciature.

Doubts about whether the Pope will be fit enough for what promises to be a gruelling and exceptionally stressful visit were raised again yesterday. The 77-year-old pontiff appeared close to collapse at the start of a service in the Sistine Chapel.

Television footage showed Monsignor Piero Marini, his master of cere-

monies, grabbing the Pope's left arm as he slumped forward. For almost a minute, the pontiff rested on the tall cross he was holding before signalling that he could continue.

When he appeared for his traditional midday Sunday blessing, Pope John Paul appeared to have recovered, though he still looked and sounded weak.

The apotheosis of Lad Rock

Review

Pat Kane

The Verve

Glasgow, Barrowlands

THE general excitement around the hall is clear: we're witnessing resurrection. Until a year ago, the Verve looked like being one of those familiar indie crash-outs — a punishing transatlantic tour regime, plus all the usual rock'n'roll inducements, turning a promisingly ambitious band into a collection of smoking wrecks.

Yet there's nothing a fanbase likes better than a triumph against the odds: and no one bears the marks of that triumph — two number one singles, critical devotion, massive sales — more evidently than singer/lyricist, Richard Ashcroft.

It's all in his face — like a tray of tubers wearing a mop-top wig, cheeks dug out with a junkie's spoon, monstrous beautiful. Ashcroft presents it openly to his mostly male audience, and it's love all the way.

More fuel to the masculinist fire comes from Ashcroft's voice — big, wide and sustained, thoroughly in love with itself, flying out between Mick Jagger and Scott Walker and rarely coming to earth. But it flies best in ballads — something at which, possibly to their embarrassment, the Verve excel. Why embarrassment? Because about two-thirds of this gig seems to be another band altogether — intent on delivering long, arid stretches of formless psychedelic swamp-funk. Led Zep

Lite, at best. All of which allows the resident noise-maker, guitarist Nick McCabe, to explore every sepulchral setting in his effects box, to only occasionally thrilling effect. With the possible exception of the new single, Lucky Man, not one of them coalesces into anything like a song, never mind the bad-head anthems they are clearly intended to be.

Before we even get to the hits, Ashcroft is strumming like someone out of the Eagles to a song called Sunset, which is as sweetly gruff romantic as any tongue-tied boy would need. The gig ends with Ashcroft doing guitar-at-the-end-of-the-party bit, stripping down songs like Space and Time to the bones, even leaving gaps for call-and-response. This would seem to be the quintessential Lad Rock moment — the pause of acoustic reflection, which gives meaning to the surrounding electric thud and blunder.

And with The Drugs Don't Work, and Bitter Sweet Symphony, the Verve have set the benchmark for Britpop self-absorption. What's always been smart about the first song is its delicate capture of the darkness beneath our age of hedonism. The drugs don't work... but they did once. And abandoning yourself to the swagger of Bitter Sweet Symphony, you are witnessing classic waster's cabaret: we all know Ashcroft's hiop, his crash and burn in a cloud of powder. This is one reason why we consume pop stars: emotional extremes by proxy. Ashcroft renders up that loser-biz moment to perfection.

If the Verve can figure out how to rock as well as they soothe, they might well live up to their own high estimation.

Informal Queen loses her head

Sarah Bosley

THE Queen never comments, which may be just as well, but the Royal Society for the Arts yesterday said it was "delighted" with the latest portrait of the monarch, which shows her head floating above her shoulders.

The head of state is said to reflect the greater informality that the monarchy hopes to cultivate in its relations with the public after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. The artist, Justin Mortimer, aged 27, is described as an up-and-coming talent.

His painting shows a very realistic Queen's face, bathed in a golden aura above a throne sketched in outline. She wears none of the trappings of state — no crown and very little jewellery.

Justin Mortimer's new portrait: 'I only hope she likes it'

The RSA commissioned the painting for the very old-fashioned purpose of commemorating 50 years of the Queen's reign.

The society's director,

Penny Egan, said: "We are delighted with Justin Mortimer's portrait of the Queen. Our decision to commission a young artist is entirely in keeping with the RSA's 250-

year tradition of encouraging new talent." The painting will be unveiled at the RSA's central London headquarters by its president, the Duke of Edinburgh, on March 12. The Queen was president from 1947 to 1952 and has been a patron since then.

Mortimer, who has won many prizes for his portraits, painted the Queen in a series of sittings at Buckingham Palace. He knew his work would be controversial. He said at the time: "With the Queen, you are taking a risk and most critics will not let you win. I only hope she likes it."

The RSA considers his rendering of the Queen's features to be "very sympathetic". Before Mortimer began the monarch was shown his portfolio, which includes portraits of the playwright Harold Pinter, the pop star David Bowie and his supermodel wife Iman.

Blair launches plan to make better-off fund benefits switch

continued from page 1

erty campaigners. Mr Blair's initiative is designed to show that, contrary to some rumours, he remains the driving force behind the planned reforms.

"They are driven by principle, the need for fairness and efficiency, not simply to save money," one ally insisted last night.

Mr Blair will now take the battle directly to critics within and outside the Labour Party. The welfare debate would be put "up in lights", he said.

How maternity benefits work

STATUTORY maternity pay is paid to employees by employers who are reimbursed by the Department of Social Security at a rate of 92 per cent of the employee's net pay (100 per cent for very small companies).

To qualify, a woman has to have worked continuously for at least 26 weeks prior to the fifth month of pregnancy, and to have earned more than £82.00

per week — the minimum income on which National Insurance is payable.

She is entitled to payments of 90 per cent of her average weekly earnings for the first six weeks of maternity leave, and £55.70 per week for the next 12 weeks.

A separate maternity allowance is available for those who do not qualify for statutory maternity pay

of creating "a state of confusion" over reform because it was "not thought through".

Mr Liley added: "He said before the election they were against means testing, now they are talking in terms of means testing even the universal and contributory benefits."

Mr Blair's comments on the state pension reflect concern that retired people with substantial private pensions also receive the state pension.

One option, previously floated by the former Tory minister Michael Portillo, would allow the state pension to be withheld from those with incomes. That would allow resources to be moved to provide bigger benefits for the poorest.

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False memories, real victims

Phoney abuse leaves multiple scars

Rory Carroll

HUNDREDS of families in Britain have been destroyed by people who have emerged from therapy to make false accusations of childhood sexual abuse.

The tragedy is compounded because the accusers fervently believe their "recovered" memory and feel the same hurt as genuine victims, often prompting criminal prosecutions against their parents which shatter reputations and lives before being dropped for lack of evidence.

According to the report commissioned by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the growing army of counsellors, therapists and psychiatrists who helped generate the accusations rarely meet the family or seek proof, which would be considered a betrayal of the patient's trust.

One father is planning to sue the NHS after a judge dismissed his daughter's 24 claim against him because it was induced with drug abuse by a hospital psychiatrist.

The father has lost his job, has been thrown out of his house by his wife, lives in a bedsit, and endures stony stares from former friends who believe there is no smoke without fire.

Last November the Court of Appeal quashed Andrew Evans's murder conviction after lawyers argued his confession was based on a false memory partly induced by so-called truth drugs.

Evans had spent 26 years in prison after telling detectives he battered a schoolgirl to death. The Court of Appeal ruled that his confession, made under the influence of sodium brijal when he was a hysterical 17-year-old, was unsafe.

The report dismisses the theory of "robust repression", which was used to explain

recovered memories of ritual satanic abuse, cannibalism and ritual murder. Police did not find any evidence of such practices.

In the United States, where murder prosecutions have been based on recovered memories, several families have successfully sued therapists whose patients retracted their memories.

According to Roger Scottford, President of the British False Memory Society, 87 per cent of the 900 families who contacted the society since it was founded in 1983 were accused by adult daughters.

In contrast with abuse reported by children, only 3 per cent of the adults' accusations were made against step-fathers. Half were made against biological fathers.

Mr Scottford said yesterday that he was deeply concerned that renewed attempts to extend the statutory time limit for bringing civil actions could open the floodgates to more claims of childhood abuse, which must be brought before the alleged victim is 24.

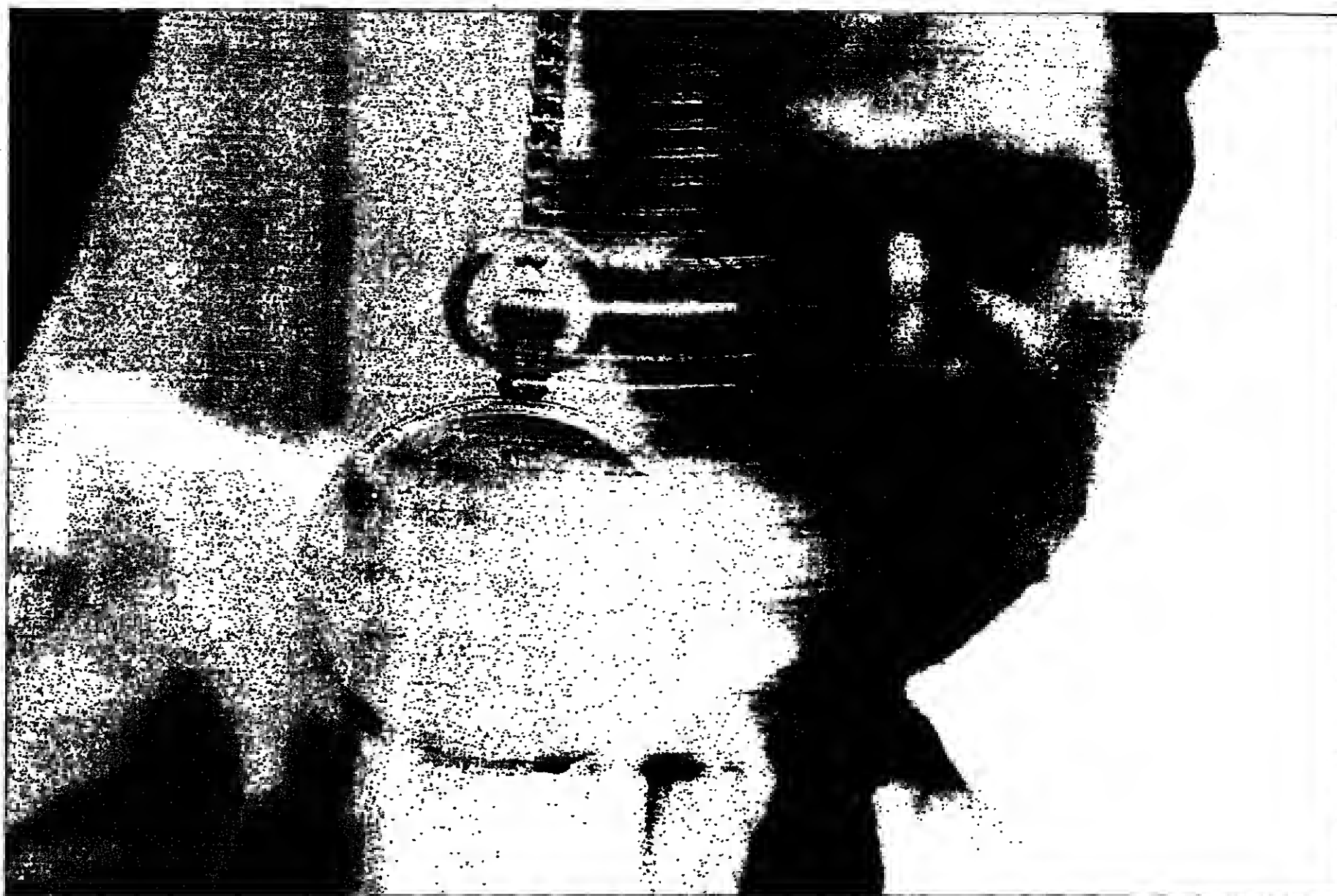
"We could have 50-year-old women going into therapy and coming out accusing their 80-year-old fathers of sexual abuse," he said.

The report says false accusations, in addition to causing immense harm to families, can mentally cripple the patient, who in many cases sought therapy to treat depression, eating disorders or stress.

One American study showed rates of suicidal impulses, self-mutilation, hospitalisation and marriage break-ups soared after therapy.

Difficulty in finding corroborative evidence is aggravated by the unusually early age from which the alleged abuse is often dated, sometimes between the ages of one and three.

The report criticises therapists who encourage patients to remember previously unknown abuse.



Hypnotherapy at work... Report says that those who help to generate accusations rarely meet the families concerned or seek proof

PHOTOGRAPH DAVID SILLITOE

'You become so dependent you think the psychiatrist is God. They put sexual things into your head all the time'

NEARLY 900 accused families have sought help from the British False Memory Society since it was founded in 1983. The names of the people in the following accounts have been changed.

CAROL, aged 46, is blamed by some of her family for sending her bewildered, innocent father to an early grave. Two months after being admitted to a hospital in southern England suffering from depression, she had accused him of childhood rapes and whippings.

"There was a consultant psychiatrist and tutor who insisted on going back to my childhood. He was convinced I'd been sexually abused. It came out of the blue. I was shocked and incredulous. I couldn't believe this at all."

"But he said, 'You'll

never get better unless you remember'. He said I was treatment-resistant, which of course I was because I wasn't abused."

Convinced Carol's depression was rooted in abuse, the psychiatrist began a treatment of regression therapy using increasingly frequent doses of sodium amylal, sometimes twice a day.

"You become so dependent you think the psychiatrist is God. You become desperate to remember what you're supposed to remember. And you're so glibly you don't know what he's saying."

"They put sexual things into your head all the time. You hallucinate about things going into your private parts. I was given pen and paper and wrote some awful fantasy-type stuff."

The questions never

stopped. "How long was your mother away for? Did your father put you to bed? Did he bathe you? Watch you undress? Kiss you good night? Touch you? Where? Here? How many times?"

Carol wrote that between the ages of six and nine her father had tied her to a bed and raped her. Later she also implicated her mother and brother. The psychiatrist notified Carol's two grown-up daughters and husband.

Soon afterwards, she was released from hospital and retracted what she had written, but it was too late.

"The family split. Half of them stopped talking to my father and he wasn't allowed to see my granddaughters but no one told him why. He died crying, asking why I'd turned against him. He was in purgatory."

BRENDAN was stunned when five years ago his sister Louise, a fellow doctor in her late 20s, accused their father of having raped and sodomised her between the ages of six and 16. Suffering stress at work but not wanting to see a psychiatrist, she contacted a qualified hypnotherapist through Yellow Pages.

Brendan said: "She regressed Louise into childhood and said it was quite clear she had been abused as a child. My sister is extremely intelligent but believed this."

"Her husband thought it must be true because it came through hypnotherapy. They reviewed innocent family pictures and interpreted my dad's body language in a wholly sexual way. Then they contacted the police, and because of the seriousness of the

charge, my dad was arrested. Eventually the DPP said there was no case and dropped it."

"It was heart-breaking for all of us. My father was very wounded. I've seen him wither as a result. My mother was tearful and angry. I'm also extremely angry. There's no defence against this. How do you prove a negative?"

Three years on, the family remains bitterly divided. Brendan sees no way back from the day his sister dialled the hypnotherapist. "We've been cut off. She doesn't want to know any of us. It's a kind of bereavement."

DAVID, aged 50, is planning to sue the NHS after his daughter, aged 30, emerged from therapy claiming he had raped her. A judge dis-

missed a criminal case against him last year due to lack of evidence but David's life is in ruins.

"She went into hospital suffering a breakdown because her husband lost his business. She said she was feeling suicidal and depressed. The doctor talked her into taking some sodium amylal and out of it comes this image of someone having sex with her, but she couldn't see the face."

"They gave her a second dose and the image cleared. Called to the NHS hospital, David was accused in front of his wife of sodomising their daughter."

"That second we broke up. My wife locked up all the doors and wouldn't let me in. My wife and daughter were told this was a truth drug, so they thought whatever she remembers must be the truth."

John Wells, satirist and gentleman scholar, dies at 61

Clare Longrigg

JOHNSON, the satirist probably best known for putting words in the mouth of Denis Thatcher, died of cancer yesterday, aged 61.

He had been diagnosed with lymphoma several years ago. "He had been in remission but then it came back with a vengeance last year," his brother-in-law Alexander Chancellor said yesterday.

An actor, impressionist and writer, Wells had been one of the inner circle at Private Eye since its launch. His collaboration with former Eye editor Richard Ingrams triumphed with the Dear Bill series in the satirical magazine: fictional letters from Denis Thatcher to his golfing friend, veteran journalist W F Deedes, which chronicled the Thatcher era.

On hearing of Wells's death Baroness Thatcher said: "I am so sad. He brightened up

our lives so much." Lady Thatcher had famously been to see the stage version of Dear Bill — Anyone For Denis? At the time she called it "a marvellous farce" in public but reportedly in private said it was "a squalid little play". Yesterday she said simply: "We enjoyed it very much."

Richard Ingrams also paid tribute to Wells, whom he first met at Oxford as an undergraduate 40 years ago. "He had the reputation

then of being a brilliant cabaret artist, very, very good at doing impressions of people, but he was also a very sharp writer."

"I remember particularly writing the Dear Bill letters with him. He was a very easy person to work with and we always wrote them very quickly. It was really the most successful feature that Private Eye ever had."

Fellow satirist John Fortune, who co-wrote a novel with Wells in the 1970s, said

yesterday: "The thing about John is that he was just a very, very funny man. Not only was he very inventive but he was also a very sharp writer."

"He took physical pleasure in a joke. He welcomed it as though he were a gourmet and it was larks' tongues." Although principally known as a satirist, Wells was also a translator of books, plays and opera. Jonathan Miller, who worked with him on a production of Candide,

said yesterday: "He was a gentleman scholar as well as being an entertainer. He was always great fun to be with. He was a very good mimic and a very good parodist, but he was a serious man, and saw life seriously. He was one of those rare things in theatre: he had a genuine love of literature and a real knowledge of the 18th century, and he was a witty, amusing, urbane fellow in his own right."

Obituary, page 10



'He was always great fun to be with, but he was a serious man, and saw life seriously'

Jonathan Miller on John Wells (left)

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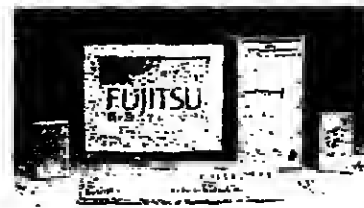
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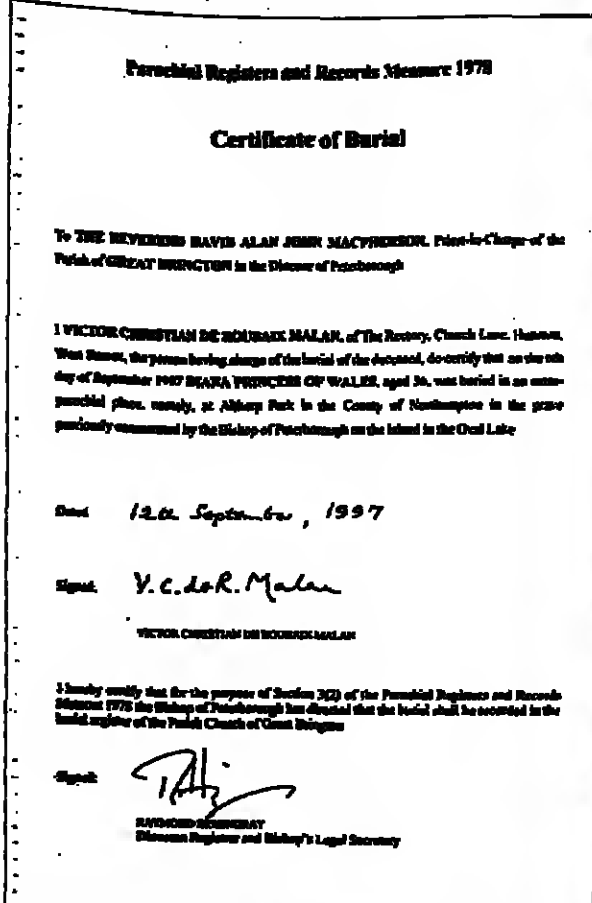
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FUJITSU



Certificate confirming Diana is buried on island in Althorp

Bishop quashes Diana rumours

Luke Harding

IT STARTED as a whisper in the pubs and bars around the village of Great Brington. By last week an upper-class lady was heard declaring that she had the story on good authority from a JP she met at a dinner party.

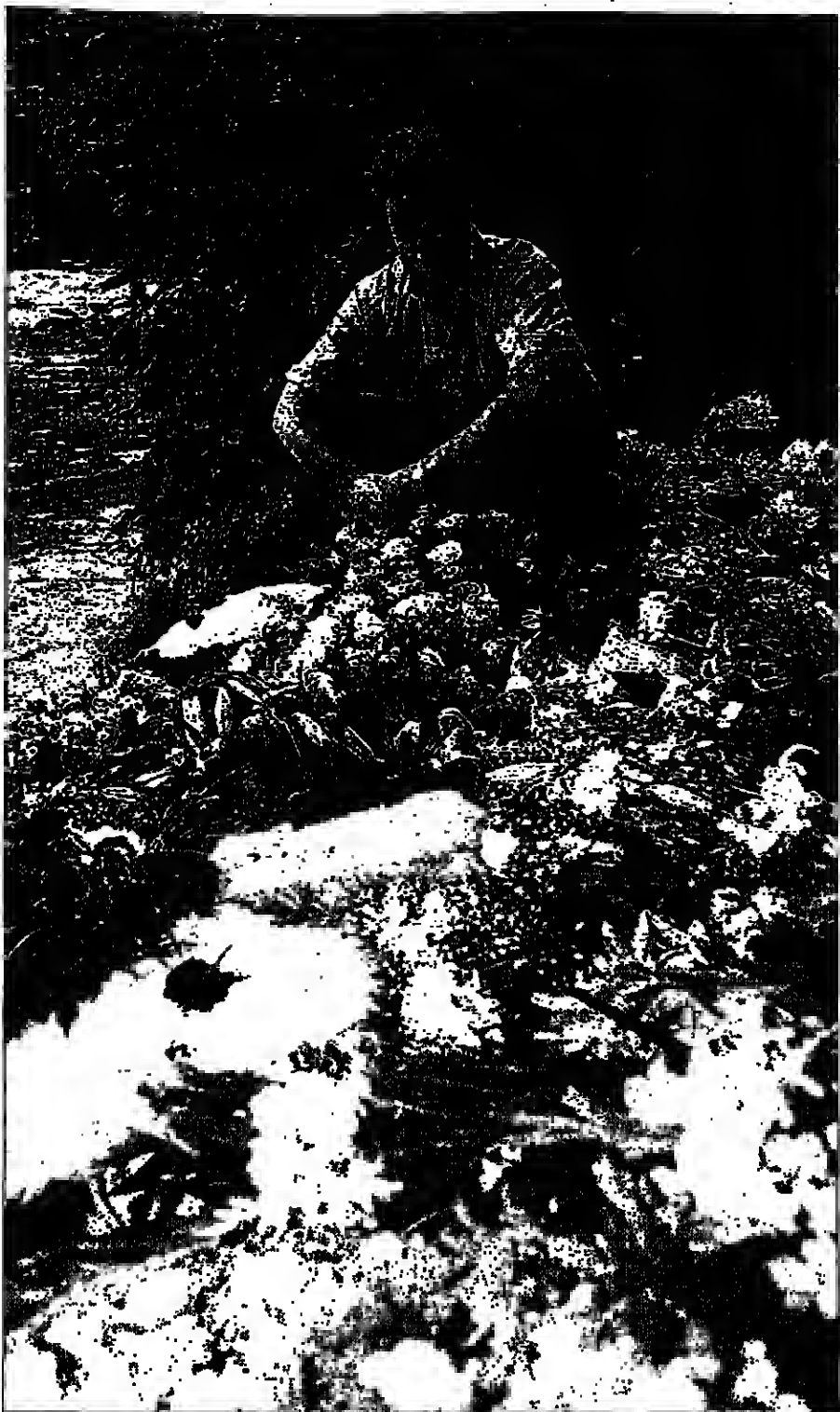
Finally, the Bishop of Peterborough was forced to act after the rumour found its way to the newsdesks of several Fleet Street tabloids. The Rt Rev Ian Cundy yesterday took the extraordinary step of releasing the burial certificate of Diana, Princess of Wales, to prove that she is buried on the ornamental island at Althorp, her family estate in Northamptonshire.

Local gossips had come up with an intriguing alternative

theory, that the princess was secretly laid to rest in the Spencer family crypt in the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, in Great Brington. She had been cremated, not buried — at least according to a taxi driver who saw smoke pluming from the local crematorium in the dead of night.

A resident historian, Alan Burman, also claimed to have spoken to a gravedigger who confirmed his suspicions. "He told me there is a real problem burying coffins in any wet or swampy ground. He even said that one coffin rose up and was washed out into a stream, so the island grave seems impractical to me," Mr Burman explained.

Yesterday Paul Needle, a spokesman for the Bishop of Peterborough, said the certificate had been released to put



Seeing is believing... an authorised picture of Earl Spencer at his sister's grave on the island in the Spencer estate, Althorp, taken in September

an end to the rumours. He added: "This has been pub and society dinner party gossip for the last four months, if not longer."

"People believe Kennedy is still alive. The fact of the matter is: 'Was the Bishop

'The wet concrete round the Spencer family vault can be explained'

conned? We don't think he was."

The vicar of Great Brington, David MacPherson, left a weary message on his answering machine yesterday, and was unavailable for comment. But earlier he flatly

denied the cremation story. "I know it is a widely held belief in Northampton that Diana is in the church, but the wet concrete around the family vault can be explained."

"After Diana's death it was opened in preparation and then closed when the earl changed his mind. If the princess is not buried on the island, my bishop and a lot of other people have been made a fool of."

The certificate, dated September 12, 1997, looks convincing enough. It was signed by a Sussex priest, the Rev Victor Christian de Roubaix Malan, who was in charge of the burial. The island site was privately consecrated by the Bishop of Peterborough three days before the funeral.

The confusion has proved no deterrent to the tens of thousands who have bought tickets to go to see the grave. About 120,000 have been sold, and the remaining 30,000 are expected to go in the next few days.

Mr Needle said Earl Spencer had opened the family vault then resealed it, having realised the church would be here under siege if Diana were there. "What I think happened is that people came into the church, saw the fresh cement, put two and two together and made about 840," he added wearily.

The final steps of a gentle giant

Political fears after Adams' relative dies. John Mullin reports

TERRY Enright had nowhere to run when the gunmen leapt out of the car and started shooting.

He was split off from his two friends outside the nightclub in the quiet street. Across the road was a waste land behind a high fence. Back down the street was his only hope, 90 yards until he reached Donegal Street, thronging with revellers at that time.

The chalk marks in the road yesterday depicted his last moments. Forensic workers drew squares around the blood and shots, rectangles where the stains were particularly bad.

Enright, an extremely fit man, signalled as he attempted to escape, already hit by the gunmen. He made maybe 40 yards, the sickening mass of the road marking where he ran out of luck.

He was the first victim of the Troubles in 1988. He was Catholic and his wife Deirdre is a niece of Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president.

It is unusual to see the Adams mask slip, but there was a catch in his voice as he remembered Terry Enright yesterday.

Kevin Moore, aged 31, his close friend, was standing beside Enright, aged 28, just outside the night club where he worked as a bouncer. Space, which opened a year or so ago, is a rave club in Belfast city centre, and it opens its doors about midnight. It gets

into full swing about 2am, and goes on until about 6am.

Mr Moore said: "A Sierra screamed up and the driver started firing. The passenger got out and started firing over the roof. Me and Big Tom, we got back in through the steel doors. But they seemed to have singled out Terry."

Enright had worked part-time at Space — which, in one of those quirks of fate is owned by relatives of loyalist political leader David Ervine — for only a few weeks. He made maybe £50 a night, and was saving for a new kitchen.

His day job was with youngsters, Protestants and Catholics, as the activities manager at the Upper Springfield Development Trust's Youth Programme. He took underprivileged kids canoeing, abseiling and camping, often in the Mourne Mountains, Co Down.

A work colleague said yesterday: "He left school with no qualifications but made something of his life through hard work. He would deal with kids no one else wanted anything to do with, and he would tell them there was another way than taking drugs or stealing cars. Where youngsters were concerned, he was a real gentle giant."

There wasn't a sectarian bone in his body.

"He was a big man, very fit. He was working on the door and said that you weren't going in, you wouldn't be going in. He wouldn't let anyone he knew to be a drugs dealer near the place. A couple of

weeks back, he refused entry to two loyalists, and they said they would be back for him. We tried to get him to quit working the door, because bouncers are such easy targets."

He was a keen Gaelic footballer with Gort Na Mona, based in the Upper Springfield area, where he had spent his entire life. He loved soccer too, and also played hurling. Was he killed because he was related to Gerry Adams? Unlikely, because even his friends, like Mr Moore, knew nothing of the link. Was he murdered by loyalist renegades because relatives of Ervine, committed to peace, owned the club?

And was his execution another example of collusion between the Loyalist Volunteer Force, opposed to the cease-fire, and the Ulster Freedom Fighters, who are signed up to it? The car used in the attack was found in UFF territory in east Belfast.

These were questions for another day at the mustard-fronted house in the shadow of Belfast's Black Mountain where hundreds of grim-faced mourners thronged through-out the day, trying as best they could to find words of comfort for Enright's wife, Deirdre, his father Terry, mother Mary, and three younger brothers.

The youngest of his two daughters, Aelise, not yet two, was playing in the front garden, dressed in her Sunday best, yesterday.

She giggled and hummed, happy in her own little world. She had no idea that her daddy was never coming home again.



Terry Enright: shot dead while working as a nightclub bouncer

Ex-marine seeks £750,000 for 'sustained racial humiliation'

Deserter claims he was made to parade with spear and crucified

Martin Wainwright

LA WYERS for the Royal Marines are seeking to block a £750,000 compensation claim from a black soldier who deserted from the elite force after suffering what he alleges was sustained and intense racial abuse.

The Ministry of Defence will tell the High Court this week that the action by Mark Parchment, aged 26, who claims that he was abused, humiliated and attacked by fellow marines, has been brought too late and should be ruled out of time.

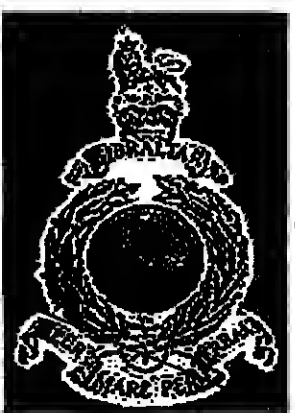
The move would prevent the public airing of graphic and highly embarrassing allegations by Mr Parchment, whose recapture after five years on the run ended with military punishment. He was discharged and an inter-

nal inquiry was launched, although no proceedings have been taken against other members of his unit.

"It would be hard to conceive of a more disturbing case than this," said John Mackenzie, solicitor for Mr Parchment, who has been unable to work since his discharge two years ago.

Mr Parchment, who lives in London, said: "It is only just dawned on me that this is coming to court at last. I have been told that the marines' inquiry into what happened is 'ongoing', but I never got any information when I try to find out what is happening."

He alleges that continuous bullying began on his posting to a commando training centre at Lympstone, Devon, for nine months of recruit training. He has claimed that his section corporal said he was to be called "Badging" and



If proved, the allegations would tarnish the marines

that all members of his training team, including officers, unfavourably used the nickname and forced him to carry a spear on parade instead of a rifle.

His compensation claim lists a comprehensive vocabulary of abuse from colleagues.

A "blacks only" initiation ceremony at Arbroath, Scotland, included an attack on him with scissors and a razor, in which hair and skin were sliced away from his head and his public hair was shaved.

He also claims a bucket of urine was hurled on to his head and that he was crucified in a hut as a "birthday treat" by having his arms bound to roof beams with adhesive tape while he hung unsupported.

Mr Parchment said yesterday: "I was terrified and had to get away." He deserted in June 1983 and eluded police until 1984.

He said he had not objected to discharge because he was permanently frightened once back in the marines. "They had also assured me that a thorough inquiry was under way and would continue."

His legal team will argue that normal legal deadlines do not apply because of the early stage at which he made his allegations known.

Embarrassed Leeds goes to court over its 'wee problem'

Martin Wainwright

THE largest "unofficial lavatory" in Europe has been closed by police after a four-month crackdown on incontinent night-clabbers.

Almost 400 people have been cautioned for taking desperate measures outside Leeds City station, all but a handful during the early morning exodus from clubs and discos.

Forty men will appear next month at a single session of Leeds magistrates court, with a further 150 expected to follow. They face a maximum £150 for disorderly conduct, the charge selected to cover doing what you shouldn't in the street.

"The effect is disgusting," said Inspector Graham Hobson of British Transport Police, whose Railtrack colleagues have received regular complaints, particularly from visitors to the four-star Queen's Hotel which fronts the station.

"When people come out of the clubs, they come to the station to get a taxi and because they are standing in a queue alongside a wall, some of them just take the opportunity to urinate."

The scale of the problem is embarrassing the city, in spite of jokes about a "wee problem".

Police are now holding talks with nightclub owners in an effort to improve in-house facilities. Discos are also being asked to adopt the parental formula for children in the run-up to closing time, with reminders to "go before you go".

Inspector Hobson said the problem had become serious last summer with noticeably unfragrant effects on the station surroundings, especially on a Sunday morning.

Thatcher saw soccer fans as 'enemy'

John Duncan
Sports Correspondent

MARGARET Thatcher believed that football fans were the second enemy within and she handed over control of policy on hooliganism in the 1980s to a group of ministers who knew nothing about the game, according to Kenneth Clarke, the former Chancellor.

"The government as a whole didn't think that football fans were the enemy within but Margaret Thatcher did," says Mr Clarke who was health secretary in her government, on Radio Five Live's Dream Team programme tonight.

"Someone took her to see a game in Scotland once and whether it was the songs the crowd sang or something else, it had a marked effect on her."

Mr Clarke, who is a confirmed football fan and has followed Nottingham Forest for 50 years, was excluded from any advisory role in the government on football policy.

"When she discovered that any of her ministers went to football regularly, she wondered why we were joining this band of hooligans."

"She kept on considering policy on football hooliganism as far as I can see, with a group of ministers advising her, who she relied upon but

Loves and loathing

She loved:
Americans
Small businessmen
Flying
Rupert Murdoch
Picking up litter
Nuclear power

She loathed:
Europeans
The CBI
Trains
The NHS
Football
Coal miners

who had never seen a football match in their life."

The centrepiece of her anti-hooligan measures was a proposed compulsory identity card scheme for all fans that was opposed by practically everyone within the game.

The 1989 Hillsborough disaster in which 37 people were crushed to death led to

the commissioning by the government of the Taylor report which rejected Mrs Thatcher's plans. Since her fall in 1990, football has enjoyed an increase in popularity, hooliganism has been cut and English grounds are recognised as among the safest and most modern in the world.

MI5 to revamp image by shredding 'subversive' files

Richard Norton Taylor

MI5 is speeding up the destruction of thousands of files on individuals it once considered subversive as part of an attempt to modernise. Whitehall sources confirmed yesterday.

The policy shift, first reported in the Guardian last year, was prompted by highly embarrassing disclosures by David Shaylor, a former MI5 officer who revealed that the agency kept files on a number of prominent politicians — including Home Secretary Jack Straw, Social Services Secretary, Harriet Harman and the Minister Without Portfolio, Peter Mandelson.

Also among the files were trade union leaders, including Arthur Scargill, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, leftwing activists, and musicians including John Lennon.

Stephen Lander, the head of MI5, has said privately that the number of files held by the agency were in "the low hundreds of thousands".

However only a very small proportion of the files still have "intelligence value", according to security sources.

MI5 is also preparing a new version of a brochure, expected to be published in March, outlining new priorities including countering international terrorism and or-



Stephen Lander: wants to modernise image of MI5

ganised crime. It will say that MI5 now has the equivalent of only half a person out of its total staff of 1,900 who is responsible for countering domestic subversion.

MI5 regards one British-based organisation — the rightwing extremist group Column 88 — as subversive, according to security sources.

However, under the 1989 Security Service Act, MI5 may target any group or individual which it considers in the future to be subversive — a

term described broadly in the act as "actions intended to overthrow or undermine parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means". Whitehall sources argue that MI5 must continue to have this legal right because of Britain's EU obligations and the existence of extremist groups, of the right as well as the left, on the continent.

MI5 is also obliged to keep significant files under the terms of the Public Records Act.

Handwritten signature or mark at the bottom of the page.

UK gangs take £300m market in brand fakes

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

BITAIN'S illegal trade in counterfeit goods is being rapidly transformed from street-corner sales of perfume and designer-label clothes into a fully-fledged £300 million a year industry, according to research published today.

The value of the fakes seized by trading standards officers has doubled in the past two years, but only accounts for around one tenth of the goods in circulation as organised gangs have replaced small-scale operators.

Criminal gangs are becoming increasingly sophisticated, developing their own production facilities to assemble finished goods from imported components, said Andrew Clark, of the University of Warwick School of Law.

While clothes, computer software, audio cassettes and CDs, video cassettes and perfume were the goods most likely to be seized last year, there were signs of counterfeiters selling new lines.

Raid by enforcement officers led to hauls of beer and brewing equipment, computer central processor units,

garden gnomes, medical tubing for use in ultrasound surgery, scientific and nautical equipment, and spare parts for vehicles.

Dr Clark said his research showed that the growing array of national and international anti-counterfeiting legislation was helping to contain the problem but was not removing it.

Imitations were usually aimed at younger people and the counterfeiters were very responsive to their target audience — switching between products and brands to reflect changing trends and tastes.

Although widely seen as harmless, product counterfeiting had potentially serious economic and social consequences, said Dr Clark. The trade could reduce firms' sales and damage their reputations.

Dr Clark, writing in a paper contained in Business Connect, published by the Economic and Social Research Council, said consumers also suffered. Apart from the obvious problem of people being duped, counterfeiting pushed up the price of genuine goods and in some cases posed real risks to health and safety.

More broadly, the booming business harmed job prospects and resulted in a loss of tax revenues.



Millennium Dome taking shape in Greenwich, London. 'Control has got to be given to creative people, not administrators and politicians,' said Stephen Bayley. PHOTOGRAPH TOM JENNINGS

Dome minister 'no dictator'



Stephen Bayley... Minister 'too easily swayed by public opinion... The dome might be crap' PHOTOGRAPH BEN CURTIS

Mandelson insists he has grip on 'drifting' project in face of tirade from departed designer

Luke Harding
and Michael White

PETER Mandelson last night shrugged off a vicious personal attack on his handling of the Millennium Dome and maintained that he had "got a grip" on a project that was "suffering from drift".

The Minister Without Portfolio was responding to withering criticism from Stephen Bayley, whose resignation as the dome's creative director was accepted on Friday.

Yesterday Mr Bayley claimed that Mr Mandelson was "running the project like a dictator" and that the dome might turn out to be "crap".

He also accused the media-dubbed Dome Secretary of being too easily swayed by

public opinion and complained of a "mismatch between the creative impulse and the political impulse".

Yesterday Mr Mandelson said: "I have not been a dictator, but I have been decisive."

He remained optimistic about the £750 million project.

The operator, the New Millennium Experience Company, had "a first-rate chief executive and team working with me, but earlier last year the last government was not providing the leadership they needed to do their job well".

"Mr Bayley's other remarks do not merit a response," he added.

Mr Bayley had complained that his views were being ignored by the minister and by heads of the Millennium company. The final straw was Mr Mandelson's trip to Disney World in Florida, he said.

"The whole way in which it is being run is pure East Germany. I get memos talking about the 'creative task force'," he added in an interview with the Sunday Telegraph. "It's absolutely scary."

"If Mandy went down to a voodoo sacrifice in Brixton tonight he'd come back tomorrow saying: 'We must have some voodoo sacrifices in the dome'."

The dome's backers last night remained adamant that Mr Bayley's departure was not so much a setback as a huge relief. "He was a mistake we inherited," conceded one key player. "He was appointed as design consultant, not as creative director. That was a role he attempted to grow into on his three days a week contract."

Mr Mandelson met Mr Bayley only once before his resignation before Christmas after six months on the project, but there was evidently a clash of outlooks. One insider called the departing designer "an elitist snob".

In a conciliatory statement

at the weekend, the company's chief executive, Jennie Page, said Mr Bayley had "contributed significantly" to bringing design companies to work on the dome's exhibits.

She also held out the hope that he would still be involved in the project. By last night, however, the mood was less charitable. A company spokeswoman said that "in the light of his comments today" he would not be asked to undertake further work.

The spat — seen as being between two soaringly ambitious men with sensitive egos — seems to have had its origins in an esoteric feud over a proposal from the company to create "fluffy koalas" wearing Union Jacks. Mr Bayley, a founding director of Sir Terence Conran's Design Museum in London, saw the plan as "narrowly nationalistic".

Mr Bayley stood by his comments yesterday: "Control has got to be given to creative people, not administrators and politicians."

French omelette, page 9

News in brief

Jailed nurse in hospital

DEBORAH Parry, the 39-year-old British nurse awaiting sentence for murder in Saudi Arabia, has been transferred from prison to hospital suffering from depression.

The victim's family has waived a death sentence, but Parry's colleague has been given eight years and 600 lashes as an accessory.

Girl killed in brawl

RACHEL YOUNG, aged 20, died on Saturday night after being stabbed in a fight involving 40 people at a pub in the village of Grove in Oxfordshire. A youth also had emergency surgery.

£32m cocaine find

COCAINE worth £32 million was found by French customs hidden in the wheels of a

Land Rover waiting to board Le Shuttle for Kent. Two men from West Yorkshire will appear before Leeds magistrates today.

Costa packet

TWENTY men and three women have been charged with attempted smuggling after 500,000 cigarettes were seized off a charter flight from Tenerife at Exeter airport.

Top woman earner

A SURVEY of women earners by Harpers and Queen magazine puts romantic novelist Barbara Taylor Bradford top with £11.6 million a year. Barrister Cherrie Booth QC is said to earn £200,000 a year.

Lottery win shared

THREE tickets shared Saturday's £83 million lottery jackpot. Winning numbers were 3, 10, 11, 27, 47 and 49; bonus 8.

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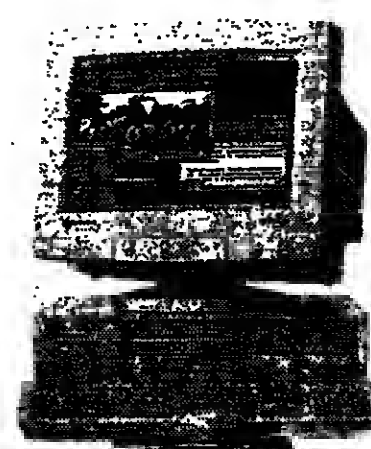
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Benighted foreigners in the dark about the glories of New Britain

Luke Harding

HE IS best known as England's deadliest striker. But according to 3 per cent of Indians, Alan Shearer is not just a talented footballer: he is the British prime minister.

The revelation — contained in a Royal Mail survey of international attitudes towards Britain — is likely to plunge Tony Blair into further gloom, as he tries to shrug off stories of ministerial infidelity during

his five-day tour of Japan.

While Mr Blair has been singing the praises of British industry, prime minister Shearer has been at home, quietly recovering from a six-month ankle injury. The England captain is also preparing for the World Cup this summer. Shearer is better known in his native Newcastle for his exquisite heading, rather than his Tallyrandian diplomatic skills.

The survey contains more bad news for Mr Blair. He

may be in Japan, but some 4 per cent of the Japanese population think Prince Charles is prime minister of Britain.

The Glorious Revolution of May 1 seems scarcely to have penetrated the Indian subcontinent, where 26 per cent of people believe John Major still runs 10 Downing Street — a chastening thought. Richard Branson's name pops up in the survey. Four per cent of Germans believe Prime Minister Branson leads our great island nation.

British women are seen through international eyes as polite, intelligent and sophisticated, although one in 10 of those polled complained they smoke too much. Some 4 per cent of foreigners, meanwhile, believe British men are dirty.

"It is clear from our survey that people overseas don't know as much about Britain and the British as we might think or like," Royal Mail spokesman Stephen Davis said. "Britain is often perceived as a stuffy, insular country."

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Pigeons fly over Sarajevo's Bascarsija square, where they have recently returned for the first time since the war in Bosnia. The birds gathered there in thousands before the war, but it was deserted during the siege, when Sarajevo television's tips for survival regularly included "how to cook pigeon". PHOTOGRAPH: DANIEL KRISTANOWIC

U-turn over cancer drug trials in Italy

John Hooper in Rome

A MID highly charged controversy, the Italian government this week is preparing to test a cocktail of drugs that some believe could provide a cure for cancer. Faced with revolt among district judges and local authorities, who have already made the treatment available free to some sufferers, the centre-left administration has been forced to drop demands for extra proof of its effectiveness before further trials. Reports said the Imperial Cancer Research Fund in London would be among three overseas bodies asked to help.

The drugs cocktail was created by Luigi di Bella, a medical researcher from Modena, now aged 85 — who, with dense clouds of white hair, has an extraordinarily high forehead. He looks very much the true "boffin".

Professor Di Bella first began researching a cure for cancer after failing to save the life of a two-year-old boy, the son of a friend. He made what he claims was a breakthrough about 20 years ago. But Italy's drug advisory council turned down five applications for his method to be tested.

One leading cancer specialist has branded him a "good-for-nothing". Another said: "The Di Bella cure ranks on a par with the waters of Lourdes."

But the professor's supporters cite documented examples of private patients, who were able to afford his treatment and whose tumours, allegedly, vanished.

Many believe his failure to get a licence for the treatment stemmed from "corrupt relationships between certain drug companies and the health administration that were exposed in the early 1990s. Others think the authorities simply did not want to fund a costly cure.

The cure involves a growth-inhibiting hormone and, depending on the nature of the tumour, a combination of

drugs and vitamins. His recommended initial dose of the hormone alone costs almost \$4,000 a month.

The health minister, Rosa Bindi, said she did not give the go-ahead because the professor refused to give precise details about the cure.

Two days before Christmas, Ms Bindi issued an order saying there would be no trials unless, by January 13, her ministry had received the records of 100 successfully treated patients.

It was seven days before this order that the country-wide revolt began. In Maglie, southern Italy, Carlo Madaro, a lower court judge sympathetic to alternative medicine, ruled that the hormone



Luigi di Bella: claims to have new cancer treatment

should be administered by the state health service to a child suffering from brain cancer. By last weekend he had handed down another 14 similar rulings. District judges in 11 other towns followed his example.

The regional government in Puglia, where Judge Madaro sits, authorised free distribution of the drug, and other regional administrations also threatened to defy Rome before the cabinet's U-turn.

Now, however, the atmosphere is so emotive that some fear it could obscure judgement. Ms Bindi warned: "The scientific validity... cannot be the subject of a popular vote or referendum."

Big Brother and friends are still watching in Germany

The days of the Stasi and Gestapo may be over but their spirit lives on — probably next door, reports **Ian Traynor** in Bonn

IF YOU do not appear to look German, beware of taking a taxi near Germany's eastern border. You may be turned over to the border guards. If the driver does not inform the police about a suspicious "alien" whom he or she picks up, the driver risks prosecution.

Dozens of cases are now winding their way through the eastern German courts, with taxi drivers being accused of aiding and abetting illegal immigrants. Jail terms and hefty fines are becoming routine.

"It was up to the accused

to exercise particular care in choosing his passengers," a court in Zittau, on the Polish border, ruled last month, throwing out an appeal by a driver against a 16-month prison sentence for picking up three Yugoslavs who had entered Germany illegally.

There have been more than 20 prosecutions of taxi drivers in the area in less than a year, and many more cases are pending. Now many drivers refuse to pick up foreigners and stand accused of racism.

Their associations complain that drivers are not

empowered to check passengers' identities and that their statutes oblige them to pick up fares without discrimination. But a border police spokesman said: "The obligation to pick up passengers ends where a crime begins."

If this provokes alarm among civil libertarians, it is but a single stone in the mosaic of snooping evident at many levels of German life. The effects range from the humdrum and the ludicrous to the menacing.

Western Germans tend to view such practices as that involving the taxi drivers

as peculiar to the culture of the former East Germany, where the Stasi secret police erected one of the most comprehensive networks of informers ever seen in Europe.

But preying on neighbours and workmates and reporting misdemeanours is rampant — and condoned — in the west, too.

Park illegally outside your house and a neighbour, rather than complain personally, is likely to inform the police and have the car towed away.

The authorities in Munich, where feeding pigeons is illegal, have issued a snoopers' charter encouraging citizens to shop offenders. A woman aged 78 received a £100 fine last month.

"So the city is calling on us to denounce our fellow citizens. I find that incredible in the light of this country's recent history," a furious resident wrote to a local newspaper. "Freedom, tolerance and community spirit are now hollow words, while denunciation is the nation's new (old) virtue."

The government and opposition last week moved to step up the fight against crime by agreeing to the most draconian eavesdropping legislation since the Stasi and Gestapo.

Under the legislation, the police obtain powers to bug the homes of suspected criminals. But doctors' surgeries and lawyers' and journalists' offices could also be bugged. Only a last-

minute revision scrapped provisions for the bugging of confession boxes.

The finance ministry, unable to push through a proper income-tax reform, has just about agreed to offer financial rewards for tip-offs on tax evasion.

"We don't want to encourage denunciation," the finance ministry's number two, Jürgen Starck, said. But the measure could herald a bonanza for embittered employees and envious citizens eager to sell tales and cash in.

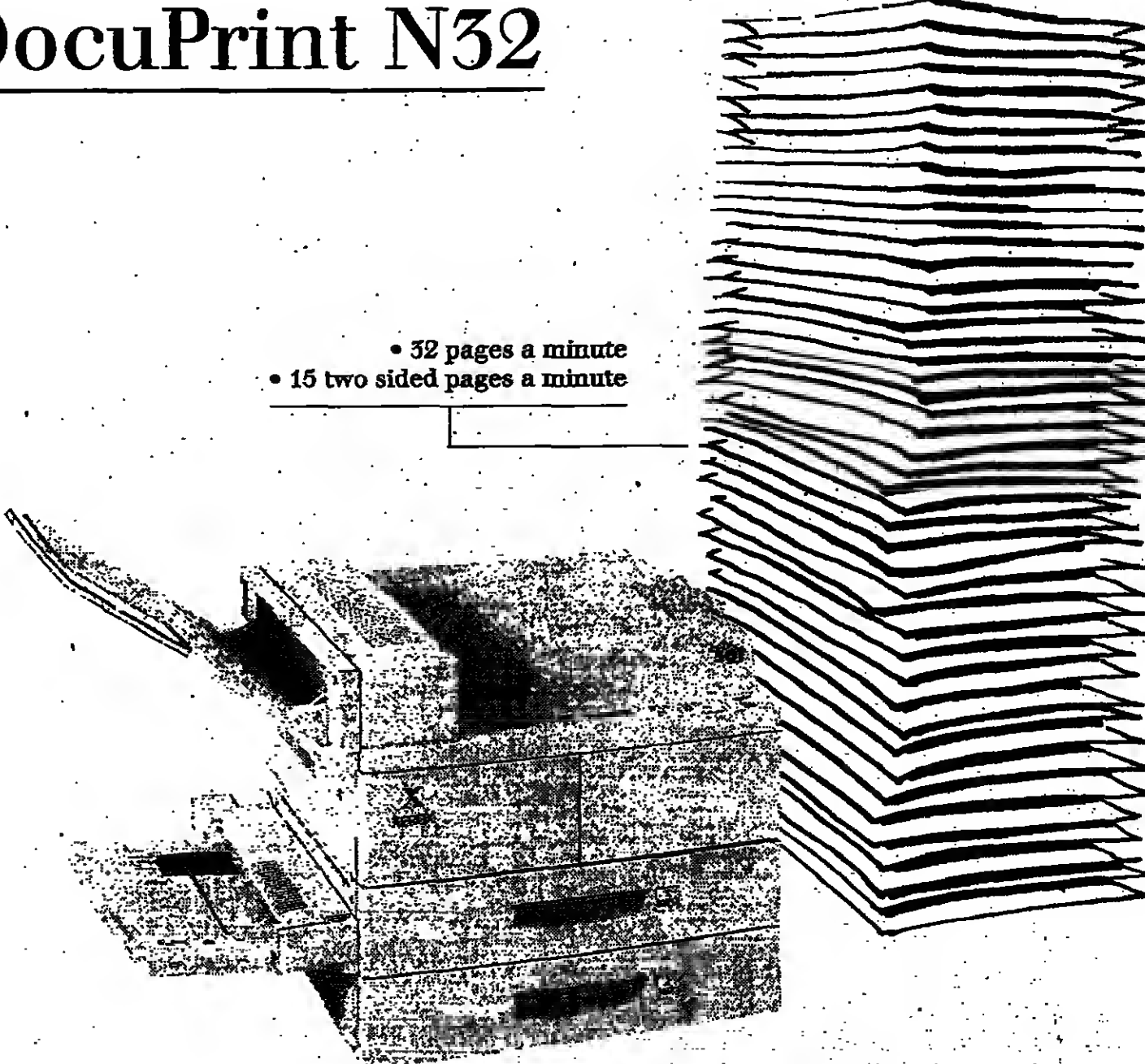
Several of the big banks are already being investigated for allegedly helping moneyed clients dodge tax. Much of the information came from disgruntled insiders.

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Mexican army flees raucous peasants

Michael McCaughan
Galeana village, Chiapas

FIVE soldiers abandoned in the hills, another injured; a stray bullet, a misfiring grenade launcher, a radio antenna destroyed: a violation of the Geneva Convention and a humiliating retreat that was the tally in the Mexican army's latest incursion into Zapatista villages in the Lacandon jungle.

At 10am last Thursday 100 soldiers began climbing the mountain paths up to Galeana village, high above a jungle canyon close to insurgent positions of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN). Villagers gathered for a quick meeting while guides tracked the army's advance, which came to a halt in a sugarcane field 500 yards away.

Villagers, mainly women and children, positioned themselves in the undergrowth above the soldiers, who cut cane and chatted, oblivious to the 240 eyes watching them.

The women wanted to confront the army immediately, but the men disagreed. After a hushed conversation, they decided to act only if the soldiers climbed the final stretch of path to the village.

For an hour they hid in the bushes as a helicopter buzzed overhead. At 11.30am the first helmets approached the village, and the order to confront the soldiers passed along the row of purple, pink and red huipiles, the Tzeltal blouses and dresses of the region.

A bloodcurdling roar went up as women and children swarmed down the path towards the soldiers, who were trying to keep their balance in the mud.

The soldiers did not have

time to look up. They turned, raised their arms in surrender and fled back to the cane field. There was no time to think, as the terrified soldiers formed a wall, guns pointed at the women and children.

The women kept up a deafening chorus of demands — for peace, the immediate departure of the soldiers and implementation of the San Andrés peace accord.

"Chiapas is not a barracks," yelled one woman. "Go home, lazy dogs, and do some honest work," said another.

The village men tried to calm the women, now venting their fury at the four years of harassment, rape and economic blockade that have accompanied the big army presence in the region.

The troops' commander tried to impose order, yelling for silence. One soldier, caught behind the community line, desperately tried to untie his radio antenna but had to ask a Zapatista villager for help. The villager

obliged, cutting the wire with a machete. The relieved soldier raced back to his comrades, who agreed to leave, their guns still raised.

Suddenly a shot went off and each side paused, taking a step backward. The shadow of Acatel, where 45 villagers were killed by paramilitary forces two days before Christmas,

grew, a villager said. The destruction of more than an acre of sugarcane violated the Geneva Convention, which prohibits "unnecessary destruction of property".

Half an hour later, the troops reached the highway and stood their ground. "You're not to blame," one villager told the soldiers. "It's the government's fault for not complying with what they signed."

The soldiers listened in silence, shaken. "We're going, we're going," said the weary troop commander. "But we're waiting for an ambulance. We have an injured soldier, bitten by a snake."

"Carry him you bastards," responded. The community returned to the turnoff to their village and waited. Minutes later, army vehicles arrived and picked up the troops. But they then advanced toward the villagers instead of heading back to barracks. The troops whistled and blew their trucks' horns, beckoning up the hillside.

"Some soldiers got left behind," villagers explained. We returned up the hill and, sure enough, faces peeped out of the undergrowth — five to eight soldiers who had been cut off. The trucks crossed the highway until the last soldiers reached them, then returned to base.

Chiapas is on the brink of war as the army advances on rebel positions in defiance of the 1995 Law of Dialogue, which forbids persecution of Zapatistas unless peace talks are abandoned. President Ernesto Zedillo has pledged to "exhaust all avenues" for peace. But time is running out, and the Mexican army appears to have a mind of its own.



Shouting and waving sticks, the community of Galeana, in Chiapas, Mexico, confronts a Mexican army patrol last Friday. The crowd of mostly women and children from the area, which supports the Zapatista rebels, chased about 100 government soldiers from their village, accusing the army of violating the 1996 San Andrés peace accords.

PHOTOGRAPHS
TIM RUSSO

California's cannabis clubs face closure

Christopher Reed
in Los Angeles

THE United States government has decided to fight California's legalisation of cannabis for medical purposes despite the measure's overwhelming approval in a November 1996 referendum.

On orders from the justice department, the US attorney for northern California is seeking injunctions to close six distribution "clubs".

Drug enforcement agents reported lax security at the six, but other distributors in southern California also fear closure.

The clubs sell cannabis at below street prices to people with a doctor's letter saying it alleviates their symptoms. Many are AIDS sufferers, but cannabis also relieves nausea caused by chemotherapy for cancer and muscular spasms in paraplegics.

At the San Francisco Cannabis Cultivators Club, dubbed a "pharmaceutical nightclub" — the proprietor Dennis Peron, co-author of the referendum, allows cannabis smoking on the premises. The club is decorated in 1980s style, and star music plays in the background.

California law, like that of about 20 other states, enables an individual who mobilises widespread popular support for a change in state law to put that proposed change to state voters in a referendum. If it receives majority support, it passes into law.

Michael Yamaguchi, the US attorney, said the clubs' management style was not the issue. "Under our system, laws passed by Congress cannot be overridden or supplanted by state law," he said. "And marijuana cultivation and distribution are illegal."

Mr Peron retorted: "They are trying to thwart the will of the people of California, and we will fight."

Even if federal law did supersede the state's, he said, the Clinton administration could have ignored California's initiative.

California voters passed the initiative by 66 per cent to 44 per cent.

US women fight Taliban oil deal

Ed Vulliamy in Washington

THE outraged leaders of America's women's movement vowed yesterday to fight the Clinton administration's backing for a \$4.5 billion (\$2.76 billion) oil pipeline deal between a California energy giant and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

The latest chapter in the deal was revealed by yesterday's Washington Post: the arrival by helicopter of four Afghan clerics on an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico to meet directors of the Unocal Corp last month.

This meeting followed one in Texas, where the Taliban had been tempted by VIP treatment and a shopping spree for luxury goods.

On the oil platform, the mullahs ate a specially prepared meal and examined Unocal's latest deep-water drilling technology — with a view to building a pipeline to carry Caspian Sea oil to the Indian sub-continent.

The 790-mile pipeline would carry oil south from northern Turkmenistan, through Azerbaijan and Pakistan and out into the Persian Gulf, with a possible extension to New Delhi.

Sources say that President Bill Clinton is eager to clinch the deal.

He reportedly believes the Taliban-bull pipeline would free the new states of central Asia from dependency on Russia, which demands huge transport fees, and bypass Iran and Iraq. But the Taliban's treatment of women — which includes banning girls and women from schools, hospitals and public places — has led America's women's movement to launch one of its biggest international campaigns

to try to prevent White House approval for the pipeline.

State department officials are privately wary of giving the president's blessing to the scheme. The women's campaign could "stall, if not scupper" presidential approval "and certainly stir up trouble in Congress", said one official yesterday.

The feminists will lobby their old adversaries in the right-wing Republican majority, among which the Taliban counts few admirers, who will be only too happy to challenge the president about co-opting up to a militant Islamic regime.

The campaign is spearheaded by the mainstream National Organisation of Women — which accuses the Taliban of "gender apartheid" — the Feminist Majority group and the Working Group on Human Rights for Women, whose organisers have met Unocal.

"I don't remember us organising on an international issue like this," said Eleanor Smeal, who leads the 30,000-strong Feminist Majority.

Les Browning, an official with the Working Group, said she had asked the company to ensure women were trained in the engineering and construction of the pipeline.

"They were less than enthusiastic at first about meeting us," she said, "it took them a while to understand the constituency we represent."

The campaign will involve demonstrations outside the Afghan and Pakistani embassies and lobbying at the United Nations and Congress.

Unocal has been pressing ahead with the project while diplomats from the US, Russia, Iran and Pakistan fail to reach a settlement on oil pipelines. The company has already sponsored a \$900,000 training programme for 137 Afghans at the University of Nebraska, all of them men.

The debate will be embarrassing for President Clinton, who in large part owes his reelection to women voters. Hillary Clinton and the secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, have criticised the Taliban's treatment of women, with Mrs Albright calling the regime "despicable".



Sonia makes debut where Rajiv died

Suzanne Goldenberg
in Sriperumbudur, India

WITH her daughter to remind her to wave to the crowd, she has shunned for a lifetime, an uneasy Sonia Gandhi made her political debut yesterday at an election rally yards from the spot where her husband, Rajiv, was assassinated.

Her speech, delivered in English and relayed to a crowd of more than 10,000 by a Tamil translator, was superbly crafted to extract the maximum sympathy for India's most fiercely reclusive widow, and by proxy, the ailing Congress party that has been her family's preserve for three generations.

Before the Italian-born widow's decision to campaign, the party had been heading for disaster in next month's mid-term elections.

"I stand here today on the soil made sacred by the blood of my husband who became a martyr for India," she said. "I stand here today surrounded by security where he stood valiantly facing his assassins alone and unprotected."

Her delivery was wooden, and her response to a docile and fairly modest crowd was mechanical.

But yesterday's appearance at Sriperumbudur, a small town 25 miles from Madras, represents a revolution for Indian politics and for the woman who has resolutely ignored Congress party pleas for her to assume the patrimony left by her husband's assassination by a Tamil Tiger woman in 1991.

Sriperumbudur is a place of great sadness," she said, moments after scattering rose and jasmine petals in a private homage to the grandiose but incomplete memorial to her husband nearby.

But while her discomfort was obvious, her daughter Priyanka, aged 25, delighted in the attention.

She played the protector to her mother, aged 51, prodding her on several occasions to smile or wave.

Although Mrs Gandhi began Hindi lessons three times a week in October, she had ap-

peared deaf to Congress appeals to come to its rescue. But she, like Rajiv before her, was propelled into the hubbub of politics by the sense of duty that has ruled the Nehru-Gandhi family for the 50 years it has been at the centre of public life.

"In the years since Rajiv Gandhi left us, I have chosen to be a private person. But the time has come when I am compelled to put aside my own inclinations and to step forward," Mrs Gandhi said.

Her target, though unnamed, was the Hindu majoritarian Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), seen as the front-runner in the elections.

"I have been pained by the cynicism driving so many parties who appeal on the basis of religion, caste and region," she said. "The violence and division of the past years have inflicted wounds that will not heal easily."

The BJP says Mrs Gandhi's Italian roots — she took out Indian citizenship only 10 years ago — make her unfit to lead the Congress, a charge she answered yesterday.

"It became part of India 30 years ago when I entered Indira Gandhi's home as her eldest son's bride," she said. "My devotion to our country and to her people is unwavering and absolute."

It is uncertain what effect Mrs Gandhi's intervention will have. But while her performance was stilted, she was forgiven by crowds grateful she appeared at all.

More than 200 aftershocks had hit the area by last night. Throughout yesterday convoys of trucks, vans and buses carried relief supplies to the stricken area. Medical teams, including some from the People's Liberation Army, were also sent, along with more than 1,500 soldiers from Beijing, Xinhua said. — AP.

That's what being great is, doing material only you could do and no one else. It's about getting my truer inner feelings about things." Asked what kind of things, he offers, thoughtfully, "breast implants".
Jerry on life after Seinfeld

G2 cover story

Quake kills 50 and leaves tens of thousands homeless near Great Wall

Charles Hutzler in Nantun

TENTS, medicine, food and clothing were yesterday rushed to Chinese villages in Zhengbei county flattened by a powerful earthquake near the Great Wall.

At least 50 people died and tens of thousands were left homeless in bitter winter cold. In a worsening picture of devastation, China's state-run news agency, Xinhua, sharply increased its figure for the number of people injured in Saturday's quake to 1,489. It said 1,282 of those were seriously hurt.

In Nantun, one of scores of villages affected, farmers terrified that their quake-damaged earth-and-brick homes would collapse spent the night huddled under hastily erected lean-tos.

The quake, which measured 6.2 on the Richter scale, flattened thousands of buildings across two counties in the Yan mountains, leaving more than 44,000 people homeless and shaking buildings 150 miles to the south in Beijing, Xinhua said.

In four towns along the border between Zhangbei and Shangyi counties, 80 per cent of houses were flattened, said Huangfu Qing, a seismologist co-ordinating rescue work from Zhangjiakou, the largest city near the quake-hit area.

Suharto is on the line

And needs terminal advice

THE PRESIDENT of the world's most powerful nation phones the president of East Asia's second most populous state and tells him to get things straightened out — and do it fast. This could be the most significant telephone call of the year. Ex-general Suharto has enjoyed decades of immense indulgence, yet times have now changed. Indonesia was an essential player in the Asian cold war and Suharto brought it over to the western side. He shrugged off complaints, from the bloodbath of 1965 which lubricated his rise to power, via more bloodshed in East Timor, to growing unhappiness at his blatant nepotism which mocked the requirements of global economics. He tried it on again after the first IMF bail-out last October, backtracking over promises of reform. But this time Indonesia is not alone.

The bursting bubble of the Asian "economic miracle" has given a wider dimension to Indonesia's crisis. President Clinton's spokesman explained that the urgent telephone call was needed because of "the importance of Indonesia to the region and to the US". In the past that was a reason for talking softly with Suharto: now it requires the reverse. Other limping Asian tigers are consenting to radical surgery: to allow Jakarta to go its own way would bring down the whole shaky structure. Indonesia presents one of the biggest question marks of the new year. Will the pent-up internal pressure for political change finally combine with external pressures to break the Suharto mould?

The question will not be postponed for long. Amazing as it may seem, Suharto has been planning, at the age of 76, to seek re-election in March for his seventh successive term of presidential office. But last week's panic has created a new mood in which this agenda can no longer be taken for granted. Megawati Sukarnoputri (daughter of President Sukarno — ousted by Suharto) has broken her cautious silence to offer herself as a candidate. Over the weekend, Suharto's clique seemed to some observers to put out feelers for a deal, with speculation that he might go in return for assurances that his greedy sons and daughters would be exempt from prosecution.

So far, over recent years, Suharto has made a habit of outlasting the sceptics, not least because of the economic boom which, however unsound its foundations, has led to rapid economic growth and a significant though uneven rise in living standards. This time there are new danger signals. The panic buying of staples such as rice is one pointer. These are mostly domestic products which should be relatively unaffected by devaluation of the rupiah, yet supermarket shelves were stripped and the government has been forced to control prices and arrange for exceptional imports. Another sign is the mounting anxiety of the Chinese entrepreneurial class. The tactical alliance formed by Suharto with the most wealthy Chinese, while from time to time he condoned anti-Chinese rhetoric, could quickly come under pressure if there were popular economic unrest. The memory of the 1968 witch-hunt against the left which was extended against the Chinese minority is still vivid. Every family has heard tales of bodies floating in the rivers. It would not take much to provoke another disastrous exodus.

There is, however, still a strong possibility that Suharto will hang on regardless. The dominance of his corrupt oligopoly, argue the sceptics, means that it will not go quietly. Even if he himself wishes to step down, his wishes will be opposed by cronies and relatives who will defend to the end their privileges. The IMF has targeted a structure of cartels, tariffs and subsidies which is essential to their well-being. But as Keith Richburg of the Washington Post reports, "in almost every sector with heavy government control or where a monopoly is granted, there is a Suharto offspring or a closely connected friend of the first family".

Unless Suharto goes of his own free will, only two forces can push him out. One is a determination within the armed forces to do to him what he did to others in 1965-66. There have been statements from former officers calling on him to go, but little evidence so far of strong support among serving officers. A younger more critical generation is emerging, yet it lacks a strong alternative candidate. The second force could be a groundswell of popular pressure from below — which means from within the majority Muslim community. Here too there is a lack of a clear challenging force. The two main organisations, of almost equal strength and representing nearly 60 million of the population, find it hard to co-operate. Amien Rais of the Muhammadiyah has called for unity and put himself forward as a presidential candidate, and could rally significant support. But he faces suspicions from Abdurrahman Wahid, heading the Nahdlatul Ulama, who fears, with some reason, that united action on a large scale might provoke the armed forces to rally around Suharto or set up their own junta.

Suharto's marginalisation of these popular forces may still prove his biggest mistake. The question then is not when he goes, but whether he does so voluntarily or only after his country has been plunged into new disaster. Western leaders proffering advice by telephone should leave no doubt. Indonesia cannot afford more Suhartoism — neither can Asia and perhaps the world. It is time — more than time — for him to go.

If spring comes

Can spring be far behind?

AS BLUE tits dive into the hedge to build their nests, and cherry trees blossom in Norfolk, we need to ponder the dangers of the collapse of seasonal variation which has been brought on by global warming. Just as a whole generation of kids has grown up which cannot envisage a world without central heating or cash machines, so a new one will emerge which has no idea of the difference between winter and spring, spring and summer.

It could also lead to the rapid impoverishment of English literature as texts either become incomprehensible or are rewritten to be unseasonably correct. King Venceslas will look out upon a mild prospect with just a hint of frost in exposed places. A lover and his lass will have no special time of year (with a hey and a ho) to love. Nothing will be lucum in. Most sadly of all, there will be no more mist and mellow fruitfulness.

Yet there could be a small but important gain from this new climatic uniformity. For those who tire of repetition on Classic FM, even when it is Vivaldi, there would only be One Season to listen to instead of Four.

Ethical Foreign Policy?

RURITANIA IS CHEATING ON ITS MOST FAVOURED NATION
 TREATY WITH FREEDONIA AND HAS BEEN HAVING CLANDESTINE
 CANDLE-LIT SUMMITS WITH SYLVANIA!



Letters to the Editor

Welfare reform: it's all history

THOSE who believe the current arguments for "welfare reform" represent modernisation should look at the history of these ideas.

On June 19, 1964 the Tory Chief Whip, Martin Redmayne, wrote a minute, now released under the 20-year rule, to Sir Alec Douglas Home, then Prime Minister, about the future of the welfare state.

Referring to the pressure from Tory MPs for "a new Beveridge report" Redmayne argued: "The first essentials are to accept that the benefits of the welfare state should not be universally received; and secondly, that the insurance principle, which is already eroded, is not sacrosanct. In this connection I would like to see all above a certain level of income excluded from benefit, or at least excluded from drawing benefit."

And he argues for policies to be included in a future manifesto "allied with the major proposal of a new Beveridge which should include some indication of the possible lines of change".

The Prime Minister, commenting on this minute, wrote: "Beveridge was very costly. Would another enquiry be as bad or if we win should we not impose our own scheme?"

The rich and powerful have always resented being asked to pay for the care of others. The ballot box gave people power to buy collectively the public services they needed and to pay for them by an insurance scheme, backed up by fair taxation.

The real choice still lies between a return to Victorian conditions and 21st-century policies for full employment and social justice.

Tony Benn MP
 House of Commons
 London SW1A 0AA

Kinnock appeal

I AM writing an authorised biography of Neil Kinnock. I would like the biography to be as authoritative as possible. I would be grateful therefore if readers with anecdotes, eye-witness accounts, letters, or other material of interest could write to me at the following address:

Dr Martin Westlake
 81 rue Artan
 B-1030 Brussels, Belgium

Endpiece

Roy Hattersley

ALL GLORY, praise and honour to the Department for Education and Employment. That is not a demand which I often make of Endpieces readers. But this week — despite the intellectually disreputable decision to give private companies a key role in running action-area schools — David Blunkett and the ever upwardly mobile Stephen Byers deserve our congratulations.

The inclusion within the state system of two Muslim schools marks a long-awaited advance in the creation of a multicultural society. It also confirms that New Labour — despite its identification with the prejudices of the southern suburbs — is likely to have a more enlightened policy on race than either the Wilson or the Callaghan governments. In Opposition virtually nothing was said on the subject. But it now seems that the genuine

Lessons on school management

THE constant anti-local authority "spin" coverage of education policy (Lahour revolt on private schools plan, January 7) threatens to undermine the objectives being set for raising aspiration and achievement.

Government guidance on Education Action Zones makes clear that the local education authority (LEA) will either be the driving force behind a proposal and will take a lead part in running the zone or — in cases where the proposal comes from a business, community or voluntary organisation — "the LEA would be consulted... and we expect that LEAs will want to work closely with any successful bids which come through this route".

Each zone will be run by a forum involving all the participating schools and other partners, and an amendment to the School Standards and Framework Bill has been tabled to include LEAs by right, to which the Government will hopefully agree. The precise composition of a forum, and the powers that each school body chooses to

cede to it (if any), will vary from one case to another. Whilst a "project director" might carry out the day-to-day running of a zone, no school can be obliged to participate and the responsibilities of the LEA are not directly affected. It, therefore, seems unhelpfully negative to characterise the proposals as a "private schools plan".

The private sector's involvement through fees in the provision of education and training has left much to be desired. Whilst the performance of LEAs may be mixed, the Government — indeed the country as a whole — needs them to take the lead in achieving locally the improvement in education which everyone desires.

Martin Rogers
 The Education Network
 1-5 Bath Street
 London EC1V 9QQ

YOUR leader (Good management is the key, January 9) identified the crux of the matter. But surely a good Government should have, or should obtain, the management skills to bring about improvement in the poor areas

of education without fudging the issue and taking the easy and dangerous way out by passing the problem to big business.

The so-called manifesto commitment to bring as a smoke screen to hide New Labour's inability to recreate a new and proper state educational environment by itself, even if this means root and branch changes in some problem areas.

Gordon D Brown
 2 Whitby Avenue
 South Bents
 Sunderland SR6 8AW

IS IT surprising that the reaction of those in the field of education to the "new education experiment" exposes "a sad inferiority complex"? Nigh on 20 years of public castigation, ministerial rubbish and editorial scorn (same on you Guardian) are hardly conducive to boosting the egos of those, who like me, struggle in the day-to-day grind of trying to deliver an inappropriate national curriculum in an underfunded school to disaffected students.

Management is important, but the will to fund public (as

opposed to private/privatised) education properly is the heart of the matter. It is becoming tragically apparent that this lot are no better at understanding this than the last lot.

Anthony Purrell
 18 Bourverie Street
 Chelmsford
 Essex CM2 0UE

IT is excellent that the Government should have a programme to improve schools, but are they doing it the right way? You report (Minister vows to shame lazy primary schools, January 8) that Mr Byers is pressing his campaign to "name and shame" failing schools.

Surely it will be more effective to have a positive instead of a negative campaign, and it is much more likely to win the active support of the teaching profession. So schools which improve on their previous standard could be named and praised, and those which fail to do so could be examined to see what action is necessary.

Bill Luttrell
 182 Kew Road
 Richmond

Some fertile food for thought

HOW I agree with your Hattie Fat... so? (G2, January 7). I have travelled extensively in America since 1972. I have watched with horror at the amount of food that is consumed. In every State I have asked for small portions, children's portions, half portions and still ended up with too much food.

Last year whilst touring Cape Cod we were lucky enough to rent a cottage with its own kitchen. For six glorious days we didn't have to eat out and enjoyed a much healthier diet.

Margaret Wallis
 17 Orpen Road
 Hove, Sussex BN3 6NJ

Is there really a "Dick Seed" proposing to help infertile couples (Ban on human cloning urged, January 8)?

Gael Implezzed
 103 Burley Wood Crescent
 Leeds LS4 2QJ

SEE from current advertising Mitsubishi is claiming the reinvention of the wheel. Could this be the reason for Japan's financial problems?

R J Harvey
 Lynham, Wiltshire SN16 4PJ

D J Mozart

DAN Glaister, vocal producer Achim Queller (Arias with Attitude, G2, January 9) as saying he is surprised nobody has come up with the idea of mixing opera and rap before. Well, I'm afraid someone did.

The originator of this opera-rap fusion style was Jamaican musician and singer, Buccareer. His Man Ties Sonata, Bad Man Sonata and Skettel Concerto set the ball rolling at the end of 1996. It was a revelation to hear Mozart with a beat coming down



the road and rattling windows at a hundred yards. There was also the legendary B Boy Orchestra, who used 5 turntables to cut and mix

classical music plus beats in New York in the early 1990s. Dave Hucker
 173 Highlever Road
 London W10

Books in bind

THE question that should be considered with the UK arrival of the two US super-store bookellers, Borders and Barnes & Noble (Forget the Net books are cool, January 9), is not some pundits' forecast of the death of the book by the Internet, but the imminent death of open decision-making in British publishing.

Does anyone expect that the UK industry will fare any differently from its US counterpart? Their decision to publish a book is now almost entirely based on the buying decisions of these two chains.

It doesn't take an expert to realise that the breadth of the British publishing industry, whose life and death will be determined by the actions of companies that control a very large percentage of the market, will be forever negatively affected.

As a bookseller importing a large number of classic and contemporary titles from

Britain that US publishers have ignored because survival in the face of the monopoly stands in the way of reason, the important point to regard is who will really gain from the entry of these super-stores into Britain? It is most certainly not the culture, the writer, the individual book-buyer, or the private bookseller.

Christopher Pteroc
 Shakespeare & Co
 Bookellers
 128 Watts Street
 New York, USA

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Christopher Pteroc
 Shakespeare & Co
 Bookellers
 128 Watts Street
 New York, USA

A Country Diary

SWALLOW MOSS, STAFFORDSHIRE: icy winds swept across this harsh upland panorama, and soured through the dank woods and the heather and walls and telegraph wires so that the whole landscape seemed to emit a low, tortured moan. In the far distance a rising swirl of rooks and jackdaws was caught by one terrific gust and was scattered like gun-shot across the open fields. Yet hunkered down before me in the lee of a conifer plantation, a group of large black creatures fed almost completely unconcerned by this winter passion play. They were black grouse, one of the most beautiful and striking of all Britain's upland birds.

The male, at least a third smaller but equal in weight to a cock pheasant, has a long lyre-shaped tail, a flaring crimson comb above the eye and a dramatic white bar across its black wings that is only visible in flight. At this time of year they start to perform an extraordinary dawn display, in which they compete for dominance of a

ritual arena known as a lek. Inflating their neck and breast, the birds droop the wings and splay the tail in a wide bow, while a powder-puff of white undertail feathers is raised and spread across the bird's rear like the bustle on a Victorian dress. Bivets then run and threaten one another in this exaggerated posture, sometimes indulging in furious combat, and accompanying their tussles with a low, intense bubbling call. However, by late morning these three males had long ceased any conflict and were feeding quietly, tolerant or, at least, indifferent to one another. The only moment of drama came when they all inexplicably disappeared, flying off in a loose flurry of black and white wings. The mystery was resolved seconds later, when an anchor-shaped silhouette twisted in menacing spirals high above the moorland. It was a hunting peregrine, no doubt on the lookout for any unsuspecting game bird.

MARK COCKER

British Muslims no longer a class apart

Endpiece

Roy Hattersley

ALL GLORY, praise and honour to the Department for Education and Employment. That is not a demand which I often make of Endpieces readers. But this week — despite the intellectually disreputable decision to give private companies a key role in running action-area schools — David Blunkett and the ever upwardly mobile Stephen Byers deserve our congratulations.

The inclusion within the state system of two Muslim schools marks a long-awaited advance in the creation of a multicultural society. It also confirms that New Labour — despite its identification with the prejudices of the southern suburbs — is likely to have a more enlightened policy on race than either the Wilson or the Callaghan governments. In Opposition virtually nothing was said on the subject. But it now seems that the genuine

radicals within the leadership were hiding their time. Would that the same could be said about other policy issues.

Many Guardian readers will insist — and some will write to say — that education in this country should be secular. They may well be right. But the hard reality of what was once called the "religious settlement" is that, for the foreseeable future, Catholics and Quakers, Anglicans and Jews, will be allowed more or less to manage and partly to finance their own schools. To deny that right to Muslims — or for that matter to Hindus and Sikhs — amounts to the announcement that society regards them and their beliefs as, at very best, on the fringes of civilisation. At the beginning of Ramadan, the idea of being simultaneously British and Muslim will seem far less fanciful that it did before the announcement was made.

The decision was Labour's second great gesture of belief in the equal status of every ethnic group within the UK. The first — the abolition of the primary-purpose rule — was an equally important an-

nouncement of honourable intentions. For a quarter of a century men and women — legally and legitimately married to UK citizens — have been kept out of this country because they could not convince immigration officers that they did not take their wedding vows in order to achieve the inestimable privilege of living in Britain. Ending the absurdity of the applicant being asked to prove a negative and the officer being required to read the applicant's mind relieved untold private misery. It also demonstrated that the establishment was no longer prepared to play every dirty trick imaginable in order to keep out anyone who was brown or black. Its beneficial effects went far wider than the happy husbands and wives whose separation it ended.

The same is true of the schools decision. Only a handful of pupils and their parents will receive what they regard as the benefits of Islamic education within the state system — though more and more will apply for the same mark of respect. But Muslims who have never

been to school in their lives, whose children have graduated from British universities and grandchildren attend Church of England primaries, will be given a new self-confidence when they read the news in the Daily Jang. And all the opponents of multiculturalism — from Norman Tebbit to the National Front — will squirm at the decision to stand Islam side by side with the established church in the esteem of the Department for Education.

There is no doubt that, educationally speaking, Muslims deserve that status. For British Islam has fought its school battles with a determination that Saladin would have envied — often against over discrimination. In Birmingham, lovely school dinners and one headmistress notoriously suspended two boys for performing their religious observances during their lunch break. So the Muslims set up institutions of their own to desert warehouses and crumbling terraces, or they voted for state schools to opt out of local authority control in the mis-

taken belief that a direct grant would make religious tolerance more likely.

And for all that time — in the state system and out — some of the more pious families were spending an extra couple of hours each night learning the Koran by heart. For a Muslim education is exactly what its name implies. At Church of England primary schools the vicar visits each week and the day begins with a ceremony that resembles a service. But Islam is everything and everywhere. The new Muslim schools will, as the law requires, observe the national curriculum and prepare for the proliferating tests. But they will also do their duty by the Prophet and the Last Testament. Visiting inspectors will marvel when both obligations are accommodated. But they must also resist fear of the unknown. The multicultural society requires the unknown to be accepted and welcomed on our own doorstep.

The fact that Islamic education pays more than lip service to Islam will be regarded by secularists as absolute confirmation that it ought not to

be allowed. The Church of England has traditionally been trusted with education for the thoroughly bad reason that it does not seem to be susceptible to atheists and agnostics. Or to put another way, we have all grown up with the little foibles of the Anglicans and they no longer either protrude or offend. But nationalists are required to be rational. I tell you as an atheist, in a decent society the privileges of one religion cannot be denied to another.

For the last 10 years, Muslims in this country have endured a bad press. They are said to tyrannise their women, bleed their chickens to death and disturb peaceful infidels with the noise they make from the top of their mosque minarets. Now, wherever they go, they bring with them the fear of what is called Islamic fundamentalism. If we want to undermine the undesirable extreme Islamic minority, we ought to rejoice when Muslims are welcomed into the mainstream of British society. David Blunkett's decision to recognise two schools does exactly that.

كتاب من القرآن

Brussels Diary

Stephen Bates

IT is a truth universally acknowledged by everyone except the Belgians that they are among the worst drivers in Europe. Belgians, of course, think they are among the best, but statistics tell a different story. You are nearly three times as likely to be killed on the roads of Belgium as in Britain. Only Portugal, Spain and the Greeks have a worse record.

Indeed if you venture out in a car here it is not hard to see why. Belgians tend to drive with a weird amalgam of panache and caution: one moment cutting you up on the inside — especially on single carriageways — and the next stopping unexpectedly to admire the view.

One cause of this unexpectedly demented trait in the otherwise solid national character seems to be Belgium's relative tardiness in introducing a driving test. It was not made compulsory to take one until 1974, which means that just about anyone over the age of 40 probably hasn't had a lesson in their life. They certainly drive like it.

To British eyes, there is a fairly laid-back attitude to the rules of the road. This is a country where they only got round to passing a law obliging motorists to slow down for pedestrians on zebra crossings within the last two years. Many drivers clearly still haven't heard of it.

But while nothing much can be done to curb the testosterone surge which seems to afflict Belgians every time they get behind a wheel, the Government has at last made an effort to curb the other prime source of traffic congestion.

They have finally tackled the ancient rule of *priorité d'abord* by which drivers must give way automatically to any car emerging from the right. Once common, certainly in France and elsewhere in Europe, it still flourishes in Belgium and is fiercely defended as a national right.

Years after being consigned by the rest of the Continent to the dustbin of history, *priorité d'abord* is a source of endless fun here. It can congest a crossroads for hours while four sets of drivers work out who has the right of way. Hitherto deserted junctions can be most satisfactorily blocked in seconds.

The way to approach a side road emerging from the right is to slow down to a snail-like crawl, even though you are on the main road. The way to erupt from a right turn is with a bang and a blithe disregard for anything bearing down from your left. After all, you are in the right, the insurance company will be on your side, and your car will probably have the bumper and scrapes to prove it. He who hesitates is genuinely lost, since if you pause you lose your right of way.

Accordingly, those living near junctions grow used to the sound of tyres squealing to a halt, followed shortly afterwards by the crunch of buckling metal, shattering glass and the expletives of angry motorists.

NEIL KINNOCK, the EU's transport commissioner, has a theory that *priorité d'abord* survives only because it enlivens Belgians' otherwise boring daily existence. He has certainly spoken out about it more strongly than anything else since coming to Brussels. But then Mr Kinnock drives his own car around town.

Priorité is defended by Belgians on the somewhat unconvincing grounds that it encourages drivers to pay more attention as they go along. But recently the Government finally bowed to ridicule and changed the rules to give priority to cars already being driven around roundabouts over those wishing to join them. The trouble is, they didn't bother to tell anyone about it or even put up warning signs — those were only erected weeks after the new law came into force.

Other junctions are not included in the regulations. Because the authorities just phased the change in, roundabouts here currently resemble dodgem rides. They are littered with wreckage as the cars of those obeying the new law slide into the cars of those who have not yet caught on. Only in Belgium could a law designed to increase road safety actually make driving more dangerous.

THE ONE WITH THE LITTLE SINGING BEARD IS A JOKE SYMBOL.



The mid-life crisis that threatens Hague

Commentary

Peter Preston

HERE will William Hague be on his 40th birthday? Or, come to that, his 45th? Youngish men in a hurry like to plan these things, to try a little self-tabling. He asserts, after all, that he won't join monetary union for 10 years. Not nine or 11. 10. That carries a nice sense of the specific. There must be other dates along his line.

Let's assume that, on March 26, 2001, as his personal clock strikes the big 40, Mr Hague is still Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. (Cough, remember, are high on impossible as the party accretes democratic reforms.) Let's also assume that Mr Blair and his vast majority continue in office — thinking, perhaps, of a summer election, but much more likely, of the spring of 2002.

Let us further assume that the EMU schedule continues as posited: a locking of European currencies to the euro in five months' time and a rolling programme of integration thereafter. The franc and the mark and the rest will still be around when Young William hits middle-age, hanging on till the start of 2002. But their replacement by then, will be a merely technical exercise. All the Union's accountings — and all the business deals across the continent — will, long since, have embraced the euro dimension. The leap will, effectively, be over.

Other assumptions, to be sure, are more problematic. Indonesian collapse may have knocked the world economy off its perch. Ken Clarke may have joined Chris Patten in a monastery. Events will be wreaking their usual havoc. But Mr Hague — from his early years with McKinsey and Co — is trained in probability analysis. Here are a few probabilities.

On the one hand, he may foresee a period of turbulence for Gordon Brown and (beyond it) much of the Blair Project. That's because the Project asserts that the old cycle of boom and bust, the ebb and flow of growth and recession, is somehow over. It

is certainly suspended: the Clinton years in America have been consistent in their prosperity — creating the jobs that make welfare-to-work a viable policy.

But suppose the cycle turns out to be out over, with the uncertainty of a US presidential election and the possibility of a downturn in growth. Some economists already see that moment in waiting. It is, anyway, inherent in so much British wisdom about EMU: that our economies are not in synch because there are still cycles. And we (as even Mr Brown admits) are nearer the American one, years ahead of Europe. They are only just emerging from recession. We are on the other side of the slope. You can see the devils in this diagnosis. British unemployment — as the century turns — going up, not down. Dole queues round the Dome. A rise in welfare, because there is no work.

The Project's greatest vulnerability is the belief, or pretence, that world economic cycles are history. There lies trouble — though of a variable kind, depending on "gentle landings" and all that stuff.

But every one hand needs another. What's true for Britain — probabilities again —

will not be true for the rest of Europe. They, later in the cycle, could be looking pretty bouncy, their economies firing away. They may well have too much unemployment, as Germany and France remind us, but those in work will seldom have had it so good — and monetary union will inevitably take many of the superficial plaudits.

As Britain, on the outside, looks across the Channel, it will find the boot of the last few years on a different foot. We'll be back to envying them. Industry, especially if American markets contract, will be hopping up and down, demanding entry. And Labour, of course, has that election issue in waiting, the ground staked out, the prospect of hope renewed there to be burnished.

Here's the true Hague blind for his 40th junkies. The issue that can rescue him is also the issue that will bring him down.

The issue that can rescue him is also the issue that will bring him down

few days have shown, it's the issue most grimly calculated to split his party in public day after day, month after month. How do you win elections like that? How do you even make a showing through the hub-bub when events (again) are giving your European opponents the wind of mounting credibility? William Hague is

smart enough to know that the Parkinsonian clutter in the broadsheet press about grey-beards and "ex-ministers" is foolish: indeed, from Cecil, bizarrely idiotic. What are Michael Howard and Peter Lilley but "ex-ministers", neither of whom will be large in the land come 2002? Nor, on statistical form, will many of his advising editors be around either. His question, because he will be around, is what he can do?

Last week seemed to produce the current answer. Sweet nothing. Stick to the 10-year mantra and hope. But 10 years don't matter if Mr Hague's diary is doomed to close at the end of five years. What will there be left to him at 45? Putting his name to round robin letters in the independent? Watching a new clutch of editors leer at this has-been?

It is not an appetising prospect: a defiance of probabilities, the exalting of bad tactics over the strategy a young man (with a family to support) needs. Is there any escape? Not by drifting inert on the tide, hoping for something to turn up. It may, but it's the negation of leadership. So something, somehow, will have to give. He will have to find room for manoeuvre.

There, irritatingly, my crystal ball clouds over — except for one recent flash of extraneous light. Which president of which country did the day said that "EMU membership is in the interests of our nation — and the sooner it happens, the better for us"? Yip: the last one left, Flavio Cotti of Switzerland, tearing up an entire history of never winning anything. Perhaps William should have tried Lake Lucerne for his boneyness.

Man from the ministry of daft ideas



Paul Foot

THE exciting announcement that the Government is to call in big business to run "failing" state schools was made not by an elected minister but by a civil servant. He is Michael Barber, Labour's head of the standards and effectiveness unit at the education department.

Barber's book *The Learning Game* is full of earnest Blairite chatter. In a typical passage he announces: "A good education service is essential, but even if we were able to create a perfect education system, much else would remain to be done before we had a good society." No wonder Tony Blair describes Barber as "one of the most stimulating thinkers in British education today".

The book mocks policy-making under John Patten, education secretary in the last Tory government, as follows: "1. Invent a daft idea: better still borrow one from the Centre for Policy Studies. 2. Invent a mythical problem which the daft idea is intended to solve. 3. Place some articles in the middle-brow tabloids about how serious the mythical problem is. 4. Propose the daft idea as a solution. 5. Pilot it and declare the pilot a success. 6. Consistently not taking care to ignore all the responses. 7. Implement it."

IN OFFICE, Michael Barber follows this strategy to the letter. He borrowed the daft idea that big business can solve the problems of failing schools not from the Centre for Policy Studies but from the equally right-wing Institute of Economic Affairs. James Tooley of the IEA has been brought into the education department to assist New Labour with its ideology. Tooley was on Newsnight last week speaking up for private profit as the best measure of success in education. His idea is to clear elected government out of education altogether and abandon all schoolchildren to charity and the millionaires. Michael Barber's book has no proposal to farm out failing schools to profiteers. So how has he been conversant so quickly to such extreme rightwing ideas?

The answer is that New Labour's policy-makers so diluted social democracy as to remove all their intellectual defences against the right. So keen were the New Labourites to chuck out socialism that they abandoned the most elementary arguments

against rampant private enterprise. In the cold light of office, the earnest young compromisers from Labour's think-tank, the IPPF, are no match for the CPS, the IEA and the Adam Smith Institute, whose single purpose is to provide intellectual comfort for the rich.

HERE'S another example of the same process. On Tuesday last week there was some anonymous criticism of directors of the dumbered-down media group Granada for paying themselves £374,000 extra to "compensate" for the shortening of their contracts.

New Labour Ministers watched anxiously. Would Granada's multi-millionaire chairman Gerry Robinson, who spoke so warmly for Tony Blair during the election, crack under the criticism? No he wouldn't. On Thursday Granada announced that the directors would "stand firm" and hang on to their bonuses. A great sigh of relief went up. Robinson had courageously upheld the essential duty of the media. So there was nothing to stop him becoming chairman of the Arts Council.

ON THE same Thursday, I got this through the post from Lewes Prison, Sussex. Dear Mr Foot, I wonder if I can use this letter to air a grievance of mine going back some six or seven years.

During all that time I have been sleeping rough in Brighton, except for lengthy periods spent here on charges of shoplifting. People ask: why don't you sign on? Well the last time I tried I had £1 in my pocket and was told to return in six days. To my query, "Could you make £1 last six days?" I received no satisfactory reply. Earlier this year, I went to the housing advisory service of Brighton Council. There I was told that as I was too young (46) had no obvious physical ailments, had no dependants and wasn't mad (this was phrased slightly more tactfully) they were under no obligation to house me. In October last year I was sent to a bail hostel in Southampton where I spent 12 days trying (unsuccessfully) to obtain some money from the DSS. As I had no ID (passport, driving licence) and did not know any national insurance number they would not accept that I was sane. Had I been claiming to be, say, Gary Oldman, rather than Michael Deegan of no fixed address this might have been understandable. Anyway, I re-oddoded and have been on remand here for over four weeks charged with stealing £11 worth of food. Sincerely, Mike Deegan.

Mr Deegan writes clear prose, has a sharp sense of humour and knows a lot about life in modern Britain, but for some reason he is not even a candidate for the chairmanship of the Arts Council.



ILLUSTRATION: ANDRZEJ KRALUZE

As designer Stephen Bayley resigns and savages the Dome, Mark Lawson sees an awful warning from across the Channel

French omelette

IN RECENT years, the most frequent triggers of political crises — apart from sexual scandal — have been pronouncements from Europe and attacks on the government from those who have just resigned. In the past few days, the political project widely regarded as a crisis-in-waiting — Peter Mandelson's Millennium Dome at Greenwich — has come up against both grim omens.

Stephen Bayley — whose resignation as creative director of the Dome project was announced on Friday — was quoted by Sunday newspapers yesterday in terms which seem to reveal his desire to do to Peter Mandelson what Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson did to Margaret Thatcher.

Bayley complained that the way in which Mandelson was running the scheme was "pure East Germany". The minister without portfolio was accused of ignoring all advice from the creative team. A central argument for other critics of Britain's Millennium Project is that this country is alone in its obsession with commemorating the

year 2000. Americans, it is said, are concerned mainly with the impact of the date-change on computers, while other European nations accept the triple zeroes as an inevitability of the calendar rather than an opportunity for state expenditure and national stock-taking.

This argument, though, no longer holds. The French government has announced its own millennium architecture and entertainment. The magazine *Building Design* reports that the Seine will be irrigated with perfume and stocked with multi-coloured plastic fish.

A 200-metre-high wooden tower — called La Tour De La Terre — will be raised alongside the National Library. Designed by the architect Nicolas Normier, it will include wood from five continents. His sketches bring to mind a timber pylon or a crucifix, the second resonance perhaps in an attempt to inject a Christian element into the celebrations. (A source of concern, it was reported this week, for British churchmen about the Mandelsonian jamboree.) Although, if so, this is a cross with a restaurant at the top.

The planned *pièce de résistance*, however, is that — at midnight on December 31, 1999 — the Eiffel Tower will lay a giant egg, which will split open to expose thousands of television screens. This rather insistent image of rebirth is joined by equally strident symbols of time passing. The Place de la Concorde and the Arc de Triomphe will be converted for the period of the celebration into giant clocks. A multi-media exhibition covering 15,000 square metres seems the nearest in the French plans to what has emerged of British ideas.

MR MANDELSON has just revealed that models of his Greenwich proposals have been sent to the public by the end of next month, incorporating whatever he learned on his Florida jaunt. Drawn, characteristically, for a New Labour animal, to the American example, Mandelson could, it now emerges, have made a more direct comparison for a cheaper air-ticket.

Coincidentally, the *Financial Times* this weekend

printed the first detailed speculation about the possible contents of the Dome. Early in Mandelson's career, it was safe to assume that any information about his future activities had been planned by himself. These days, there is always the serious risk that any piece about him contains disinformation from his many enemies. Even so, the piece was accompanied by a rare editorial supportive of the Dome so cynics will suspect that some briefing had occurred. Spookily, an artist's illustration of the Greenwich exhibition included a giant egg-timer.

Is this a hint that the Gallie initiatives might give our minister without portfolio the chance for some face-saving plagiarism? Will Londoners come to sniff a scented Thames? Might a bugle ovoid descend from Big Ben before hatching the beaming face of Tony Blair on a host of Sony's? Will Nelson gaze up in bemusement from his column at a colossal log?

The problem is that the ideas from France are not inspirational. If there is a French word for *schadenfreude*, then now is the time to

feel it. This is the nation associated in the popular imagination with culture, taste and understatement. Yet, after a lengthy process of consultation with the public — citizens were invited to dream up projects reflecting the themes of "Nature, Knowledge, Innovation, Solidarity" — the French government has laid an egg. Alternately silly and pompous, the Parisian projects are rather like discovering that Jean Luc Godard was the secret inventor of the Tellytubbies.

Although Mandelson would be wise to be influenced by the plans across the channel, a secondary question is whether the reception of his own scheme will be affected, for good or ill, by the sudden planing on the battlefield of millennial planning of another flag.

Certainly, the minister without portfolio can no longer be regarded as an isolated lunatic: Europe's solo exhibitionist. And yet, as a British politician seeking to remove an unpopular project, France is not the nation you would choose to be revealed as soul-mate. The popular press, for example, are likely to see the evidence of similar thinking in Paris not as validation but supreme proof of error.

IVEN THIS, the terrifying message for Mandelson of the French announcement is that a nation celebrated for culture and architecture, after two years of contemplating how to mark the start of the millennium, came up only with the idea of tipping a few bottles of Chanel No 5 into a river, arranging for its most famous landmark to imitate a chicken and hoisting the world's biggest splitter.

At the time of Labour's victory, Tony Blair and others expressed fears about the danger of high expectations. Mandelson now faces a different difficulty: the expectation — indeed, hope — of failure.

A large coalition of hostilities towards him — personal, economic, aesthetic — wants the Greenwich Project to fail. At least one Labour MP has commented in private that the £788 million expenditure on Greenwich would be a small price to pay for the possibility of Mandelson's going down as the Dome goes up.

Short of announcing plans for a large machine which will turn pennies into £20 notes, there is no proposal the minister could announce which would diminish the hostility.

Visitors to another British design monument — the Channel 4 building in Horseferry Road, designed by Richard Rogers — are sometimes offered an intriguing angle on modern architecture by mischievous employees. Entrants walk through a glass-topped tunnel and then choose one of two circular rotating doorways. Elegant at ground-level, this detail, staff wryly indicate, takes on a new meaning when looked down upon from the top floor.

From this perspective, the rounded corridor with the two ovals at its base brings to mind a futuristic fertility symbol or a piece of steel-and-glass graffiti. At sometime, it reportedly appears that the channel's workforce is being ejaculated into the dust. It is not known whether this signature of masculinity was intended by the architect. Many will feel, though, that a similar saucy portal would now be ideal for the forthcoming Dome. For it is a common opinion that, if ever a building should begin with a cock-up, then it is this one.

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John Wells

Anyone for laughter?

WE WANT him back. The truth of the matter is that we can't do without him. John Wells' death at the age of 61 from cancer, with which he fought a long, courageous, half-amused, often winning battle, has left us without a precious voice of reason, good jokes and common sense. To say that he was clever, entertaining, erudite, a linguist with a deep love of music, which he was, is not enough to say that he was a singularly dotty world than any other.



Almost lovable... Wells as Denis Thatcher

Wells was the son of an itinerant clergyman and after St Edmund Hall, Oxford, taught English in Germany for a year and then returned to Eton from 1961-1963. I imagine that to be taught by him was a singular pleasure. When he was at Oxford he co-wrote and acted in a review at the Edinburgh Festival which, in the early 1960s, earned a telegram of appreciation from Peter Cook. Cook brought him to Private Eye and the Establishment, the club where John Bird performed and the *Beyond the Fringe* team came after their show and the schoolmaster Wells did John Betjeman imitations very late at night. From there he got on to the editorial board of Cook's *Private Eye*, met Richard Ingrams and Mrs Wilson's *Diary*

erable mercy to the spouses of these characters — Mrs Wilson at Joan Littlewood's Stratford East and the Criterion in 1968 and Denis Thatcher in *Anyone for Denis* in 1981 — indeed all his acting (from *Private Lives*, *Jumpers* and *Bartholomew Fair* in the 1970s to *The Philanthropist*, *Greystoke* and *Travels with*

my Aunt more recently — had the same quality of affection, and he seemed to love what he chose to ridicule. He spoke of the first person he imitated, apart from his clergyman father, a master at Eastbourne College school who was "very fat and poised on two tiny feet and spoke in a ridiculous maiden aunt voice". When he caught Wells imitating him the master was not angry, but offered the boy a part of Mrs Candour in *The School for Scandal*. No doubt he could sense the delight in human absurdity which made Wells's *Betjeman* such a lovable figure and gave Denis Thatcher his chance of immortality. And when he talked, as when he acted, you could feel John Wells's gratitude to anyone who gave him the chance to laugh.

He managed to do a huge variety of things while giving the impression of not trying very hard. He translated Büchner's *Danton's Death* for the National, adapted *Gulliver's Travels* and triumphed in the hugely difficult task of translating opera librettos — *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Barber of Seville*, *La Vie Parisienne* and *The Magic Flute* — which requires musical taste, verbal dexterity and the ability to make jokes with correctly placed open vowels and verbal stresses. In fact his literary interest was so wide that, as he once said, he was translating Büchner while acting in a film called *Rent a Dick*.

The illness first attacked some years ago. It was like, he said, being in a dark room with a savage beast, but he defeated it. When it returned he lost his hair and wore a beautifully made theatrical wig until his hair grew again and he was better. Through it

all he remained the same enjoyable, hugely enjoying John Wells. His last book was a brilliantly funny, well informed and unexpected work on the House of Lords, for which he clearly felt the same amused affection he had for Denis Thatcher. But the beast in the dark room was on the prowl again. He went back to hospital, and finally home to the wife and daughter who loved him.

Writing of his hero Peter Cook, ("when he spoke we fell about laughing") he remembered Cook's strange characters, Sir Basil Nardley Stoads (Chief Examiner and Dragger of the Seductive Brothers) and his close friend and betrayer the Climistoric of Winterting. After Sir Basil's death a postcard "of an artistic nature bearing a South American postmark" arrives;

on it is written: "Sorry to hear you are dead. See you Thursday. Je t'embrasse. Clinty." It made John Wells laugh and seems a suitable message for a man we feel we can still see with as much affection as he showed for the world.

John Mortimer

Michael Billington writes: John Wells was an extraordinary chameleon figure: comedian, actor, translator, journalist, pseudo-diarist and even, on occasions, novelist and dramatist. But he was no different behind his large and versatile output. I first encountered him at Oxford when he was appear-

ing in Gordon Crosse's musical version of *An Italian Straw Hat* and stopped the show with some protracted business over a recalcitrant collar-stud. I gave him one of the few unequivocal rave notices I've ever written.

Wells was a hard man to pin down: he seemed to pop up everywhere. But on two occasions he turned *Private Eye* diaries he had co-written with Richard Ingrams into highly successful stage shows. In the first, *Mrs Wilson's Diary* the supposedly Prime Minister's wife turned into a stiletto heroine. Something similar happened with *Anyone for Denis?* seen at the Whitehall in 1981 and based on the alleged correspondence between Denis Thatcher and Bill Deedes.

Wells, who played the titular hero, so thought himself into the character's speech patterns and blimpish outlook as to make him, if not admirable, at least comically consistent. At one point he memorably admonished Mrs T with: "You come in with a rock-solid mandate to club the bloody unions back into the Stone Age, and who do you whine out the moment it comes to any kind of confrontation, but pinkie Prior, who is, in my humble opinion, about as much use as a one-legged man at an arse-kicking party."

Wells had the natural parodist's gift for assuming other voices: something he turned to good account when he wrote a bogus 18th-century play, *The Projector*, for Joan Littlewood, that seemed uncannily prophetic of the Roman Point disaster in which a block of flats partially collapsed.

Wells was an enigmatic figure: he enjoyed having one foot in the Establishment while leaving the other free to boot it up the ramp. He initially acquired fame as a teletextist largely through his legally accurate impersonation of Selwyn Lloyd. But I suspect he prided himself much more on his work as a writer, particularly his 1970s stage and TV adaptation of *Gulliver's Travels* and, more recently, his well-received book on the House of Lords. Behind the mask of impish wit lay a serious man passionate about literature, history and the best of European thought.

John Campbell Wells, writer, actor and director, born November 17, 1936; died January 11, 1998

Philip Seed

Crusader for peace and love

ONE evening, three years ago, I was walking on Rosemarkie beach on the Black Isle, north of Inverness, with Philip Seed. Nearby salmon fishers were hauling in their catch, and at one point in mid-conversation, Philip felt compelled to join in. A great 20th century Gallilean figure, dressed in grey suit and yellow knitted cardigan, he pulled on the net in an action that was highly symbolic — but which would have enraged his doctors.

Seed, who has died aged 67, was an academic and writer whose dynamism and unflagging energy went into the teaching and practice of social work. His 21 books include the much translated *The Expansion of Social Work in Britain* which was a source for students for many years, and his brainchild, the *Research Highlights* series, which put academic findings into the hands of practitioners.

He had strong connections to the Highlands — and co-authored *Men and Women in the Highlands and Western Isles*, and *All Kinds of Care*, with Margaret Thompson which dealt with children's facilities in the Highlands and

Western Isles. In 1978 he was founding Raddery School on the Black Isle, which was to develop its own radical therapeutic programmes. Philip's own experiences as a young man persuaded him to join the governing body. He gave 19 years service and was chairman for eight years. "A school like Raddery," he wrote in *Developing Holistic Education*, "is based on understanding and on love. The staff need to understand the children and to love them. Education is the product."

Not quite the language of government green papers. Seed's parents were Quakers from Rickmansworth and he was educated at Leighton Park, the Quaker boarding school in Berkshire. He studied history at Cambridge and took a London School of Economics social science certificate. There followed nine years with local social services, then a year at the Quaker Woodbrooke College, taking a course in international affairs — Seed identified closely with Quaker pacifism. He worked in Glamorgan and at the University of Wales, in Cardiff, as a tutor. In 1968 he spent a year at what is now Robert Gor-



Seed... unflagging energy

don's University in Aberdeen before moving to Aberdeen University where he taught and took his doctorate. He moved into full-time research at Aberdeen University and subsequently Dundee. He wrote on community care, and worked on projects around alcoholism, homelessness, brain injury and physical and mental handicap.

In this last context he was active in the Whitestown Centre, the Buchanan Alcoholism Service, and the Cornerstone Housing Association. In the 1980s he was active in the British Association of Social Workers. He chaired Perth Greenpeace and was a member of the city's Justice & Peace Group. Active in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament — for whom he wrote books and pamphlets — he was twice a local Labour candidate until he became disillusioned by the party's disarmament policy. He sold Peace News on the corner of Aberdeen's Union Street and Union Terrace and ran a Saturday second-hand book barrow in Pitlochry High Street, where he sold his own books to anyone who was interested — offering mark-down prices for cash sales. He marketed his last book, co-written with Dundee's Professor Greg Lloyd, with a zeal difficult for the unwary to escape and even in his last days was planning his next book.

In his later years he became a Catholic while retaining his Quaker links. He is survived by his wife, Ingrid Burger, and nine children and step-children.

David Dean

Philip Seed, social work academic, born May 14, 1930; died November 6, 1997

Léon Poliakov

The scourge of anti-Semitism

LÉON Poliakov, who has died aged 87, will be best remembered for his monumental four-volume study of anti-Semitism as an historical force. Poliakov knew the theme at first hand. The Russia in which he was born was the country that gave the word "pogrom" to the world.

Poliakov's father was a journalist and the family belonged to the Russo-Jewish bourgeoisie with the right to live in St Petersburg. They left Russia soon after the Bolshevik revolution, first for Berlin, and then Paris. There, from 1920 onwards, Léon spent the rest of his long life. He was a pupil of the Lycée Janson-de-Sailly and then went on to study law. But he preferred journalism and in 1933 collaborated with his father in launching *Purser Tugendblatt*, an anti-Nazi journal catering for the nu-

merous German refugees in 1930s Paris.

Had it not been for the second world war and the German occupation of France, Léon Poliakov might have remained a journalist. Instead, he joined the French army and then the Resistance movement, working with Jewish groups, who later became the nucleus of the *Centre de Documentation juive contemporaine*, founded in 1943/4 which gathered and preserved records of Jewish wartime experience. At the time their work was illegal, carrying with it the death penalty if they were found out. He became head of the centre's research department when it moved to Paris at the end of the war and continued to work there for a further 10 years.

One of the first products of those experiences was Poliakov's study of the Jewish fate in the Italian-occupied parts of France, which was published in 1946. This was followed in 1951 by *Bréviaire de la Haine*, an account of the experience of French Jewry during the war. It was translated into English under the title *Harvest of Hate* (1951). Poliakov's research and publications brought him to the attention of the French authorities, who asked him to translate Gestapo archives and accompany

the French delegation to the Nuremberg war crimes trials.

By the thrust of Poliakov's major interests was clearly worked out: the study of anti-Semitism in all its manifestations. Beginning in 1955, he published a four-volume history of the subject with which his name will be mainly associated. It is a popular work and draws much of its evidence and material from literary sources, so that it has been superseded by works which have analysed at greater depth the subconscious motivations of the anti-Semite and give greater emphasis to the relevance of social situation to the formation of the anti-Semitic mentality.

But Poliakov's pioneering work remains valuable for its wealth of references and its awareness of the literary and philosophical ramifications of the phenomenon. In his later years it may well be that Poliakov himself became aware of these weaknesses, for from the late 1980s he increasingly combined the study of anti-Semitism with theoretical research into the roots of racist thinking, the psychology of scape-goating and its role in European history. There is no doubt that his research fellowship at Sussex University in 1964-8 contributed to this change of em-

phasis. It may well be however, that Léon Poliakov's name will live as the author of an analysis of the relations between Jewish bankers and the Holy See. This was accepted by the Sorbonne in 1984, in fulfilment of the requirements for a doctoral thesis, and published in 1985 under the title *Le Commerce de l'Argent chez les Juifs d'Italie du XIIIe au XVIIe siècle*. An abbreviated version appeared in English as *Jewish Bankers and the Holy See*. It originated in a series of notarial registers from the Roman ghetto, brought to Poliakov's attention by the late Fernand Braudel.

Poliakov used this and other material to produce what has already established itself as a major work of Jewish and Italian economic history. Here, as elsewhere, it may well be that Poliakov could have given a further dimension to his work had he possessed the ability to use sources in Hebrew, but even in their absence, Poliakov's work stands as a rare achievement in a variety of fields and as a major contribution to the understanding of this tragic century.

Miriam Kochan

Léon Poliakov, historian, born November 25, 1910; died December 4, 1997

Birthdays

Kirstie Alley, actress, 43; Anthony Andrews, actor, 57; Michael Aspel, broadcaster, 66; P W Botha, former president, South Africa, 82; Dame Fiona Caldicott, psychiatrist, principal, Somerville College, Oxford, 57; Stella Cunliffe, statistician, 81; Joe Frazier, boxer, 54; Anne Howells, soprano, 57; Kaili Mountford, Labour MP, 44; Des O'Connor, comedian, singer, 66; Luise Rainer, actress, 88.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN OUR Birthdays column, Page 12, January 7, we incorrectly referred to the Bishop of St Albans as the Rt Rev William Herbert. We should have said the Rt Rev Christopher Herbert.

ON PAGE 4, January 5, a paragraph attached to the foot of a report headed Help for boys lagging behind girls at school, referred to the National Association of Social Workers, when

it should have said NASWE, the National Association of Social Workers in Education.

IN AN article headed, 'Twistin' by the pool', G2, January 6, we misspelled the name of Jimmy Saville, and overlooked the internal capital E in EastEnders.

IN PRESENTING an article headed The secret diary of John Lennon, on the Arts

pages of G2, Page 8, January 8, we misspelled the name of its author. He was Martin Dimery.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Jan Myles, by telephoning 0171 239 5555 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 239 5687. E-mail: readers@guardian.co.uk

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Asia in turmoil



Hard look... Fifteen big construction projects in Indonesia are being reviewed by President Suharto in an effort to appease the IMF

Dealers braced for sell-off

Larry Elliott, Tony May and Nick Cunningham-Bruce in Bangkok

DEALERS in the world's financial markets were preparing themselves today for their most turbulent week since the Asian crisis erupted amid fears that Hong Kong and Singapore were being sucked into the turbulence.

The City was braced for a big overnight sell-off in the Far East after the apparent breakdown of rescue talks for Hong Kong's heavily indebted investment bank, Peregrine Investment Holdings, added to the gloom caused by higher interest rates on Friday.

With shares in the former colony crashing last week, there was speculation that a new wave of global selling by putting at risk Hong Kong's currency peg with the US dollar, seen as

one of the last bastions of stability in the region.

Meanwhile, the Singapore government admitted yesterday that it could be heading for recession, while officials from the International Monetary Fund were arriving in Jakarta on Wednesday to join his deputy, Stanley Fischer, and Larry Summers, the deputy secretary of the US Treasury.

Wall Street closed more than 200 points down on Friday, with most of the damage coming after dealers in London had left for home. The fall

was threatening to enter a new and potentially dangerous stage. Michel Camdessus, the IMF's managing director, will arrive in Jakarta on Wednesday to join his deputy, Stanley Fischer, and Larry Summers, the deputy secretary of the US Treasury.

Wall Street closed more than 200 points down on Friday, with most of the damage coming after dealers in London had left for home. The fall

left the Dow Jones Industrial Average with its worst week in eight years, falling 4.8 per cent, to 7880.43 — the biggest weekly drop since 1988.

Market-watchers in New York said last night that the Asian jitters were set to continue. "We'll have a difficult environment in the next couple of months," said Robert Sireed, a money manager with Northern Trust Company in Chicago. "Everyone's

worried, because nobody knows how what's happening in Asia will affect profits."

Both the Hong Kong and Singapore stock markets have fallen by 41 per cent since last summer. In the currency markets, the Indonesian rupiah has dropped by 34 per cent against the dollar during the last two weeks.

Analysts said the mood among investors in London was growing increasingly

cautious amid talk that profits of UK companies would be affected by the Asian collapse.

On Friday, shares of apparently vulnerable stocks fell. HSBC, the parent of Midland bank, lost 4 per cent of its value, as did Cable & Wireless. Standard Chartered fell 8 per cent.

On arriving yesterday in a city where the hearing of food is prompting fears of widespread civil unrest, Mr Fischer said he was going immediately to a meeting where he would review Indonesia's progress in implementing the terms of the \$40 billion (\$25 billion) rescue package agreed in October.

The IMF's priority, he made clear in earlier remarks, is "an acceleration of much-needed reforms."

In a gesture to appease the IMF, President Suharto's government announced at the weekend that it was cancelling 15 big projects.

Leader comment, page 8

Fund managers vote with their feet

Ian King

LATIN America has replaced the Far East as the heart of emerging market fund managers' portfolios in the final months of last year.

At the same time, certain eastern European states, including the Czech Republic, were seen as particu-

larly risky, with only Hungary regarded as popular.

Countries singled out by fund managers as representing especially good value included Israel, Egypt and Peru, while Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Colombia were least popular. Nearly all the fund managers

praised the Brazilian government's economic policy. Latin America's growing trade links with the US were seen as important.

The Global Emerging Market Survey polled institutions controlling over 85 per cent of emerging market funds around the world.

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Valentino cries his way to bank

John Glover in Milan

VALENTINO, the leading Italian fashion designer, wept as he announced the sale of his maison to HDP, a Milan holding company, at the weekend. The tears, he said, were not of sorrow: "I am proud and happy over the deal which will mean my name is perpetuated."

HDP is to pay \$300 million (\$186 million) for 100 per cent of the fashion house Valentino Garavani and his partner, Giancarlo Giammetti, founded nearly 40 years ago in Rome's Via Condotti.

Valentino has net sales of around 180 billion lire (€60 million), although the company claims that goods sold under its brand are worth about ten times that figure. Its 380 employees rang up operating profits of 31 billion lire last year.

Under the terms of the deal, which has been under negotiation for two years, Giammetti and Valentino will take a stake of around 2.5 per cent in HDP and Giammetti will become a director. Valentino will become a formal member of the group of shareholders who control HDP.

Other members of this group include the Turin carbuilder Fiat, the secretive Milan merchant bank Mediobanca, and Italian institutional investors.

The agreement with Valentino, who has signed an exclusive five-year consultancy contract, is an important move for HDP as it pursues its goal of creating Italy's first industrially based fashion and luxury goods group.

HDP already owns 100 per cent of GFT, the Turin-based textile concern that makes and markets the creations of several stills, including Valentino's. Valentino's acquisition by GFT's



Valentino... frocks to go PHOTOGRAPH: PIERRE VERDY

parent brings significant vertical integration.

Since he set up shop as an artisan-tailor in 1968, Valentino has dressed many celebrity customers, but more recently his clothes have been criticised for being too formal and too stuffy, and the company's image has suffered.

Valentino has also been slow to diversify into the accessories business, which allows names such as Gucci, Versace and Armani to reap further profits from selling bags, belts, scarves and shoes.

It will be tough to make the deal work, as the stark contrast between the tanned, elegantly turned-out Valentino and the pallid, stodgily dressed ex-bankers who run HDP illustrated at the weekend.

Insurers seek tax break

Teresa Hunter

A NEW breed of tax-free home loans could soon cut the cost of homebuying, if the Government agrees to hand back to traditional endowment mortgages the generous tax-breaks which they enjoyed in the seventies and early eighties.

Insurance companies are asking the Treasury to extend the £1,000 annual life assurance limit suggested for the proposed Individual Savings Accounts, with a view to designing a new with-profits endowment policy, which

could then be sheltered from tax.

A number of insurance companies, including General Accident, already have such a product on the drawing board, which they believe will trigger a renaissance for traditional with-profits home loans, but they are concerned that the existing annual limit will prove too restrictive, pegging monthly premiums to a £1,000 annual life assurance premium over the past 25 years with GA will this year mature at £120,784, returns may not be so buoyant in the future against a background of low inflation but rising

house prices. However, an ISA would still allow a couple to jointly invest £186 monthly.

A GA spokesman said: "The Government's proposals relating to life assurance were the most unclear element of its consultation document, but we believe it should be possible to use the new individual savings account to produce a tax-free endowment for repaying home loans, which would place these life policies on an equal footing with pension and personal equity plan mortgages."

"A tax-free endowment would be a popular means of repaying a home loan."

However, the Chancellor,

Gordon Brown, believes that the £50,000 life-time ceiling on contributions suggested by the Government, combined with a £5,000 annual overall limit, should not be increased.

It remains to be seen whether the Association of British Insurers can persuade him that within these limits the annual ceiling for life assurance should be lifted.

A spokesman for the Halifax, Britain's biggest provider of home loans, said: "We believe ISAs could be used to repay a mortgage tax free, but a wholesale return to endowments would not necessarily be the best way forward."

NatWest looks for new chief

Tony May

NATIONAL Westminster Bank is understood to have asked Colin Southgate, chairman of music company EMI, to be its chairman-designate to succeed Lord Alexander of Weedon.

NatWest wants to "refresh" its board following some divisive rows over the bank's performance, merger strategy and prospects.

The first row at the bank this year is likely to be over incentive packages for the two remaining operations of the group's investment banking arm.

Proposals put up late last year by the Greenwich NatWest and NatWest Corporate Advisory Group units, have been rebuffed and a cheaper compromise is being developed before a meeting of the remuneration committee next Monday.

Derek Wandless, the chief executive, is said to be keen to devise a plan which provides long-term rewards with

out guaranteeing large sums to executives who fail to deliver. But talks have been complicated by plans to sell parts of the investment bank. Chip Kruger, the head of Greenwich NatWest, the remaining trading division, was keen to create a partnership at NatWest Markets which would have seen staff own as much as 25 per cent of the operation.

In addition, the break-up of the business, including the sale of the equity business to Bankers' Trust and the equity derivatives business to Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, has been costly and could end in writedowns and losses of almost £700 million.

©Lloyds TSB is considering whether to sell its 372 estate agencies in a £250 million management buy-out.

No decision has been taken but a review launched after the merger of the Lloyds Black Horse branches with TSB's agency network found only a small profit had been made in a turnover of £56 million.

Now is the season for a climate test

Tony May

A CLEAR picture of whether retailers enjoyed a boom or slump in sales at Christmas should emerge with the publication of crucial trading figures. The British Retail Consortium's monthly sales monitor will be studied carefully tomorrow for signs that the economy is either at risk of overheating or running out of steam.

The figures' publication comes on the same day as the December Retail Price Index, which shows how fast prices are rising.

Christmas statements from stalwarts like Kingfisher, Boots and Sainsbury's will also be keenly appraised — but none more so than Dixons, due on Wednesday.

Fears of a second-half slowdown and a dull Christmas will take the spark out of strong first-half results from Britain's leading electricals retailer, whose profits look set to increase strongly with the help of windfall cash.

Analysts' estimates range from around £90 million down to £74 million, against £57.5 million a year ago. Worries about a slump in computers and sluggish sales of TV and audio equipment have hit shares.

Some analysts said that they might trim year forecasts, depending on what Dixons has to say.

Tomkins, the international food and engineering group, is expected to report higher first-half profits and dividends today. Pre-tax profits should be between £200 million and £220 million in the first half. Market attention will be focused on whether Tomkins will expand its share buyback. Dealers will be looking for news on potential acquisitions.

News in brief

Bank sees pay trend upwards

The Bank of England is today presented with fresh evidence that pay deals are beginning to creep upwards, threatening the outlook for inflation.

Settlements in the engineering industry averaged 3.4 per cent in the three months to the end of November, up from 3.3 per cent in the previous three months.

Although average earnings growth has held steady at between 4 per cent and 4.5 per cent for the last year, the Bank fears that worsening skills shortages and falling unemployment could lead to a wage-price spiral, which will have to be damped down by further interest rate increases.

Computacenter float
Computacenter, Britain's largest independent information technology company, is

preparing for a stock market flotation this summer which will value it at around £1 billion and hand its founders, Peter Ogden and Philip Hulme, about £300 million each.

The group is in the final process of appointing a financial adviser to steer the business to market. Mike Norris, Computacenter's chief executive, confirmed that a flotation was under consideration.

Microsoft scores
Microsoft has scored a breakthrough in its goal of controlling access to the Internet via television after the computer software giant won a contract to supply software for Telecommunications Inc, America's largest cable company.

In the deal announced at the weekend, Microsoft will provide software for the new generation of television set-top boxes that will allow high speed access to the Internet via TV sets.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.45 France 9.50 Italy 2.820

Austria 20.02 Germany 2.840

Belgium 58.71 Greece 453.24

Canada 2.25 Hong Kong 12.15

Cyprus 0.687 India 64.07

Denmark 10.51 Ireland 1.37

Finland 8.70 Israel 5.76

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

American Notebook

Clinton's chance for surplus glory



Mark Tran

ECONOMISTS have long argued that governments should run a budget surplus during good economic times as a way to smooth out the business cycle and provide a cushion for hard times. But with the US poised to savour its first surplus for 30 years, the White House and Congress are already devising ways of spending it.

Republicans have lost no time clamouring for tax cuts, more defence and highway spending and repayment of some of the \$5,000 billion federal debt. With Republicans doing the fiscal splits, it has been easy for President Bill Clinton to project a statesman-like image. He has said he will fight anyone who wants to use a projected surplus as a "pretext for returning to failed policies of the past."

But even the President has mentioned the possibility of "modest", middle-class tax cuts. More significantly, the disappearance of massive budget deficits allows him to launch new social initiatives. When he fed the US with red ink in the 1980s, Ronald Reagan effectively shackled Democrats. The kitty was empty for social programmes.

Now the handcuffs are off. Mr Clinton has already unveiled initiatives to help congressional Democrats in the November mid-term elections and Vice President Al Gore in his White House ambitions for 2000.

President Clinton is expected to list new proposals in his State of the Union message on January 27 as well as those announced last week. He wants to expand Medicare — insurance for the elderly — to cover people a few years under 65 and he wants \$22 billion in new federal subsidies for child care. The Republicans have already voiced their opposition and this kind of conflict will reverberate around Washington this year.

MR CLINTON'S piecemeal, finely targeted initiatives are just the kind of schemes voters like. The Republicans are already on the defensive, being outmanoeuvred by a master politician.

Only one in five Americans favours another federal income tax cut, yet the Republicans are still singing from the same old song sheet. So much for all the recent declarations that Mr Clinton is a lame duck after failing to win fast-track authority for international trade agreements.

So long a feature of the political landscape, the US budget deficit has fallen from \$203 billion in 1994 to \$107 billion in 1996 and only \$23 billion last year. The 1997 total came in \$100 billion less than forecast just a year ago. The Congressional Budget

Office normally has a solid reputation for accurate budget numbers, but last March it underestimated the strength of the US economy and the surge in tax revenues. Wall Street expects a budget surplus of \$20 billion for 1998, the main reason behind the steep fall in interest rates in the bond market. Yet this surge may recede, hence the almost universal sentiment among economists and budget experts that the surplus should be left alone.

Laura D'Andrea Tyson, formerly the White House's top economist, notes that the surpluses are small; minor changes in underlying conditions could cause them to disappear and, with the storm clouds in Asia, Ms Tyson's warnings are all the more pertinent.

The other reason for Washington to keep its euphoria in check is that these budget surpluses will disappear soon enough as the baby boom generation starts to collect social security — the US state pension — in 2008 and receive Medicare benefits shortly thereafter. Indeed, the budget surpluses are illusory. They exist only because of a surplus in the trust funds of the social security system that count against the deficit.

THE surplus in the social security trust funds — \$91 billion for fiscal 1998 — masks the true size of the deficit. Without that surplus, the deficit is projected at \$145 billion. Once the baby boomers start picking up their cheques, US government finances will be creaking again unless measures are taken to ensure the long-term soundness of social security.

Fixing social security would be the President's chance to go down in history and he is expected to launch a national debate on the subject in his State of the Union message. But action is not expected until next year, once the mid-term polls are out of the way and before the 2000 presidential election. The crux of the debate is whether to privatise at least a portion of the system into individual investment accounts.

Ironically, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, formerly of that bastion of capitalism Goldman Sachs, would be expected to favour some privatisation. But he is not a social security reformer. A government-run social insurance programme, only to be tinkered with by trimming benefits and raising payroll taxes. His deputy, Lawrence Summers, argues for partial privatisation, as do the Republicans.

President Clinton will probably split the difference, keeping a basic social security pension but allowing or requiring workers to invest some money privately, although not as much as Republicans would like.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich would put as much as 40 per cent of the 12.4 per cent payroll tax into private accounts. Given their love affair with the stock market — unless Wall Street crashes in the next two years — Americans are likely to accept partial privatisation of social security with equanimity.

Racing

Ladbroke Hurdle winner hot favourite for Tote Gold Trophy following smooth Leopardstown victory. **Graham Rock** reports

Graphic draws plenty of attention

DOUTLESS the external examiners for the *Athlone Technical College* will make some allowances when evaluating exam results in the summer. Most of the second term at the institute will have to be written off while the staff and pupils concentrate on the career of *Graphic Equiliser*, owned by a syndicate of four lecturers and the college chaplain.

The easy winner of the Ladbroke Hurdle at Leopardstown on Saturday, *Graphic Equiliser* picked up a 4lb penalty for the Tote Gold Trophy at Newbury next month, and is no higher than 4-1 to land a second valuable handicap hurdle. Paddy Casey admitted that *Graphic Equiliser* had the college in its grip. "Every one of our students feel they own the horse, and at times my office has seemed like an extension of the Tote," he said.

Backed from 16-1 to 5-1 favourite, *Graphic Equiliser* was the sixth winner of the Ladbroke for Arthur Moore. He said that his impressive victory would run at Newbury before a decision was made about Cheltenham, but he felt that another handicap, the County Hurdle, rather than the Champion, would be the more suitable target.

Graphic Equiliser's penalty for the Tote Gold Trophy takes his weight to a theoretical 12st 11lb, but with some defections anticipated from the top of the handicap, Saturday's victor is expected to carry about 12st 2lb.

If he is able to reproduce his Leopardstown form he should win again, but before you start queuing for second mortgages, a few points should be noted. Leopardstown resembles Newbury only in that both are left-handed. The Irish course is tight, with sharp turns, while Newbury is a flat, wide-open, galloping track.

The pace in the Ladbroke



Fall girl... Sister Stephanie (David Bridgewater) crashes at the first fence at Sandown after being reluctant to start the race. PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILIP HANSON/PA

was modest, and unlikely to be reproduced in the Tote Gold Trophy. *Graphic Equiliser* would not have won quite so decisively if Sharp had jumped the last cleanly, a blunder that cost Nicky Henderson's hurdler second place. *Graphic Equiliser* deserves to be favourite, but 4-1 does not excite.

The Irish horse is 16-1 for the Champion Hurdle and French Holly was quoted at 20-1 for the Cheltenham race

after beating Grey Shot by 14 lengths in the Tolworth Hurdle at Sandown. Relishing the soft ground, Paddy Murphy's sooty novice defeated a talented stayer from the Flat in the style of a top-class jumper.

Murphy said from Middleham yesterday that French Holly was "bucking and kicking" after his success. "If the ground came up soft at Cheltenham he would run in the Champion, but the Sun Alliance Hurdle is more likely,

and he will be entered for the Supreme Novice Hurdle, said Murphy, whose Stayers' Hurdle contender, Paddy's Return, will return in the Tote Premier Hurdle at Haydock a week on Saturday.

Him Of Praise maintained his winning sequence in the Anthony Midday, Peter Canale Memorial Chase and will run in the Grand National if the going is soft. "He's a very lazy horse, and very brave," said Oliver Sher-

wood. "He'll probably run in the Greenalls Gold Cup at Haydock before the National."

Ask Tom is set to carry top weight in the Victor Chandler Chase at Ascot on Saturday, and Tom Tate said he would make a decision about his stable star's participation later in the week.

Tommy Treacy may miss the ride on Danoli in next month's Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup at Leopardstown

after being banned for 21 days for riding an ill-judged race on second-placed 3-5 favourite Unarmed at Navan yesterday. He intends to appeal.

The Leicester stewards will inspect the track at 9am this morning to judge the prospects for racing tomorrow. A dry night is required. Today's meeting at Plumpton passed an inspection yesterday afternoon, but officials may look again this morning if there is overnight rain.

Southwell all-weather Jackpot meeting with form guide

GRAHAM ROCK	TOP FORM
12.30 Blazing Away (10) 10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100-101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000-1001-1002-1003-1004-1005-1006-1007-1008-1009-1010-1011-1012-1013-1014-1015-1016-1017-1018-1019-1020-1021-1022-1023-1024-1025-1026-1027-1028-1029-1030-1031-1032-1033-1034-1035-1036-1037-1038-1039-1040-1041-1042-1043-1044-1045-1046-1047-1048-1049-1050-1051-1052-1053-1054-1055-1056-1057-1058-1059-1060-1061-1062-1063-1064-1065-1066-1067-1068-1069-1070-1071-1072-1073-1074-1075-1076-1077-1078-1079-1080-1081-1082-1083-1084-1085-1086-1087-1088-1089-1090-1091-1092-1093-1094-1095-1096-1097-1098-1099-1100-1101-1102-1103-1104-1105-1106-1107-1108-1109-1110-1111-1112-1113-1114-1115-1116-1117-1118-1119-1120-1121-1122-1123-1124-1125-1126-1127-1128-1129-1130-1131-1132-1133-1134-1135-1136-1137-1138-1139-1140-1141-1142-1143-1144-1145-1146-1147-1148-1149-1150-1151-1152-1153-1154-1155-1156-1157-1158-1159-1160-1161-1162-1163-1164-1165-1166-1167-1168-1169-1170-1171-1172-1173-1174-1175-1176-1177-1178-1179-1180-1181-1182-1183-1184-1185-1186-1187-1188-1189-1190-1191-1192-1193-1194-1195-1196-1197-1198-1199-1200-1201-1202-1203-1204-1205-1206-1207-1208-1209-1210-1211-1212-1213-1214-1215-1216-1217-1218-1219-1220-1221-1222-1223-1224-1225-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FA Carling Premiership

Arsenal (0) 2 **Aston Villa** (0) 1
Leeds United (0) 1 **Leicester City** (0) 1

Man Utd	22	10	1	0	32	4	5	3	19	12	35	49
Chelsea	22	7	2	1	20	8	6	1	5	29	14	27
Blackburn	22	7	3	1	25	12	4	5	2	14	12	41
Liverpool	21	8	0	3	25	10	4	4	2	13	9	40
Arsenal	21	7	2	2	23	9	3	5	2	14	15	37
Derby	22	8	3	0	23	6	2	2	7	14	23	8
Leeds	22	5	3	3	16	12	5	2	4	15	13	6
West Ham	22	9	0	1	24	6	2	1	9	10	26	2
Leicester	22	3	6	3	13	11	4	2	4	13	11	4
Aston Villa	22	5	3	3	17	15	2	3	6	9	13	-2
Newcastle	21	5	3	4	13	13	2	2	5	9	14	-5
Sheff Wed	22	6	2	4	20	18	1	3	6	14	27	-11
Southampton	22	6	1	4	18	14	1	3	7	7	16	-5
Wimbledon	21	3	2	6	12	16	3	4	3	9	10	-5
Everton	22	4	2	4	14	15	2	3	7	9	17	-9
Coventry	22	4	6	1	17	12	1	2	8	4	19	-10
Crystal Palace	22	0	4	6	7	18	5	4	3	14	13	-10
Bolton	22	3	7	1	9	7	1	3	7	10	26	-14
Tottenham	22	4	3	4	12	15	1	2	8	7	24	-20
Barnsley	22	3	2	5	11	20	2	1	9	8	37	-38

Bolton Wanderers (0) 0 **Chelsea** (0) 3
Southampton (0) 0 **Coventry City** (1) 1

Man Utd	22	10	1	0	32	4	5	3	19	12	35	49
Chelsea	22	7	2	1	20	8	6	1	5	29	14	27
Blackburn	22	7	3	1	25	12	4	5	2	14	12	41
Liverpool	21	8	0	3	25	10	4	4	2	13	9	40
Arsenal	21	7	2	2	23	9	3	5	2	14	15	37
Derby	22	8	3	0	23	6	2	2	7	14	23	8
Leeds	22	5	3	3	16	12	5	2	4	15	13	6
West Ham	22	9	0	1	24	6	2	1	9	10	26	2
Leicester	22	3	6	3	13	11	4	2	4	13	11	4
Aston Villa	22	5	3	3	17	15	2	3	6	9	13	-2
Newcastle	21	5	3	4	13	13	2	2	5	9	14	-5
Sheff Wed	22	6	2	4	20	18	1	3	6	14	27	-11
Southampton	22	6	1	4	18	14	1	3	7	7	16	-5
Wimbledon	21	3	2	6	12	16	3	4	3	9	10	-5
Everton	22	4	2	4	14	15	2	3	7	9	17	-9
Coventry	22	4	6	1	17	12	1	2	8	4	19	-10
Crystal Palace	22	0	4	6	7	18	5	4	3	14	13	-10
Bolton	22	3	7	1	9	7	1	3	7	10	26	-14
Tottenham	22	4	3	4	12	15	1	2	8	7	24	-20
Barnsley	22	3	2	5	11	20	2	1	9	8	37	-38

Crystal Palace (1) 1 **Derby County** (2) 3
Everton (3) 3 **Blackburn Rovers** (0) 1

Man Utd	22	10	1	0	32	4	5	3	19	12	35	49
Chelsea	22	7	2	1	20	8	6	1	5	29	14	27
Blackburn	22	7	3	1	25	12	4	5	2	14	12	41
Liverpool	21	8	0	3	25	10	4	4	2	13	9	40
Arsenal	21	7	2	2	23	9	3	5	2	14	15	37
Derby	22	8	3	0	23	6	2	2	7	14	23	8
Leeds	22	5	3	3	16	12	5	2	4	15	13	6
West Ham	22	9	0	1	24	6	2	1	9	10	26	2
Leicester	22	3	6	3	13	11	4	2	4	13	11	4
Aston Villa	22	5	3	3	17	15	2	3	6	9	13	-2
Newcastle	21	5	3	4	13	13	2	2	5	9	14	-5
Sheff Wed	22	6	2	4	20	18	1	3	6	14	27	-11
Southampton	22	6	1	4	18	14	1	3	7	7	16	-5
Wimbledon	21	3	2	6	12	16	3	4	3	9	10	-5
Everton	22	4	2	4	14	15	2	3	7	9	17	-9
Coventry	22	4	6	1	17	12	1	2	8	4	19	-10
Crystal Palace	22	0	4	6	7	18	5	4	3	14	13	-10
Bolton	22	3	7	1	9	7	1	3	7	10	26	-14
Tottenham	22	4	3	4	12	15	1	2	8	7	24	-20
Barnsley	22	3	2	5	11	20	2	1	9	8	37	-38

Liverpool (0) 2 **Manchester United** (1) 2
Wimbledon (0) 0 **Tottenham Hotspur** (0) 0

Man Utd	22	10	1	0	32	4	5	3	19	12	35	49
Chelsea	22	7	2	1	20	8	6	1	5	29	14	27
Blackburn	22	7	3	1	25	12	4	5	2	14	12	41
Liverpool	21	8	0	3	25	10	4	4	2	13	9	40
Arsenal	21	7	2	2	23	9	3	5	2	14	15	37
Derby	22	8	3	0	23	6	2	2	7	14	23	8
Leeds	22	5	3	3	16	12	5	2	4	15	13	6
West Ham	22	9	0	1	24	6	2	1	9	10	26	2
Leicester	22	3	6	3	13	11	4	2	4	13	11	4
Aston Villa	22	5	3	3	17	15	2	3	6	9	13	-2
Newcastle	21	5	3	4	13	13	2	2	5	9	14	-5
Sheff Wed	22	6	2	4	20	18	1	3	6	14	27	-11
Southampton	22	6	1	4	18	14	1	3	7	7	16	-5
Wimbledon	21	3	2	6	12	16	3	4	3	9	10	-5
Everton	22	4	2	4	14	15	2	3	7	9	17	-9
Coventry	22	4	6	1	17	12	1	2	8	4	19	-10
Crystal Palace	22	0	4	6	7	18	5	4	3	14	13	-10
Bolton	22	3	7	1	9	7	1	3	7	10	26	-14
Tottenham	22	4	3	4	12	15	1	2	8	7	24	-20
Barnsley	22	3	2	5	11	20	2	1	9	8	37	-38

Sheffield Wed (1) 2 **West Ham United** (2) 6
Newcastle United (1) 1 **Barnsley** (0) 0

Man Utd	22	10	1	0	32	4	5	3	19	12	35	49
Chelsea	22	7	2	1	20	8	6	1	5	29	14	27
Blackburn	22	7	3	1	25	12	4	5	2	14	12	41
Liverpool	21	8	0	3	25	10	4	4	2	13	9	40
Arsenal	21	7	2	2	23	9	3	5	2	14	15	37
Derby	22	8	3	0	23	6	2	2	7	14	23	8
Leeds	22	5	3	3	16	12	5	2	4	15	13	6
West Ham	22	9	0	1	24	6	2	1	9	10	26	2
Leicester	22	3	6	3	13	11	4	2	4	13	11	4
Aston Villa	22	5	3	3	17	15	2	3	6	9	13	-2
Newcastle	21	5	3	4	13	13	2	2	5	9	14	-5
Sheff Wed	22	6	2	4	20	18	1	3	6	14	27	-11
Southampton	22	6	1	4	18	14	1	3	7	7	16	-5
Wimbledon	21	3	2	6	12	16	3	4	3	9	10	-5
Everton	22	4	2	4	14	15	2	3	7	9	17	-9
Coventry	22	4	6	1	17	12	1	2	8	4	19	-10
Crystal Palace	22	0	4	6	7	18	5	4	3	14	13	-10
Bolton	22	3	7	1	9	7	1	3	7	10	26	-14
Tottenham	22	4	3	4	12	15	1	2	8	7	24	-20
Barnsley	22	3	2	5	11	20	2	1	9	8	37	-38

Referees table

Reed	18	50	2	5.00	Ashby	12	36	2	3.00	Albert Ward	34,373	27,067	27,781			
Ward	12	36	4	4.50	Guthrie	11	26	2	2.04	Tottembam	29,818	26,999	26,101			
Peel	14	59	7	4.14	Lodge	11	32	0	3.00	West Ham	25,806	23,336	24,746			
Reade	11	44	1	4.00	Top supporters								Bottom	26,000	22,760	22,945
Barber	12	46	3	3.83									Crystal Palace	30,187	18,008	20,677
Wiley	12	45	1	3.73									Leeds	16,186	17,734	30,303
Alcock	12	45	0	3.75									Leeds	21,291	18,523	20,220
Reade	12	43	2	3.50									Cowesley	20,654	15,800	18,294
Wiley	9	33	1	3.67									Warrington	18,690	17,403	18,500
Reade	12	43	3	3.68									Barnsley	16,988	7,268	17,217
Wiley	11	35	0	3.18												
Wiley	19	38	2	3.17												
Wiley	12	36	2	3.00												

Top supporters

Team	Yel	Low	Am
Man Utd	65,391	65,000	55,144
Liverpool	43,854	34,765	39,225
Arsenal	35,225	37,254	38,025
Blackburn	26,700	26,200	30,881
Aston Villa	30,272	28,543	35,076
Bolton	40,112	28,530	35,030

FA Carling Premiership

Man Utd (0) 2 **Aston Villa** (0) 1
Leeds United (0) 1 **Leicester City** (0) 1

Chelsea	22	7	2	1	20	8	6	1	5	29	14	27	42
Blackburn	22	7	3	1	25	12	4	5	2	14	12	15	41
Liverpool	21	8	0	3	25	10	4	4	2	13	9	19	40
Arsenal	21	7	2	2	23	9	3	5	2	14	15	13	37
Derby	22	8	3	0	23	6	2	2	7	14	23	8	35
Leeds	22	5	3	3	16	12	5	2	4	15	13	6	35
West Ham	22	9	0	1	24	6	2	1	9	10	26	2	34
Leicester	22	3	6	3	13	11	4	2	4	13	11	4	29
Aston Villa	22	5	3	3	17	15	2	3	6	9	13	-2	27
Newcastle	21	5	3	4	13	13	2	2	5	9	14	-5	26
Sheff Wed	22	6	2	4	20	18	1	3	6	14	27	-11	26
Southampton	22	6	1	4	18	14	1	3	7	7	16	-5	25
Wimbledon	21	3	2	6	12	16	3	4	3	9	10	-5	24
Everton	22	4	2	4	14	15	2	3	7	9	17	-9	23
Coventry	22	4	6	1	17	12	1	2	8	4	19	-10	23
Crystal Palace	22	0	4	6	7	18	5	4	3	14	13	-10	23
Bolton	22	3	7	1	9	7	1	3	7	10	26	-14	22
Tottenham	22	4	3	4	12	15	1	2	8	7	24	-20	20
Barnsley	22	3	2	5	11	20	2	1	9	8	37	-38	18



Don't mention the score... Klinsmann groans in despair

Premiership: Manchester Utd 2, Spurs 0

Glitzy Giggs finds holes in Spurs' spare parts

DAVID LACEY

BY THE time Manchester United resume their quest for the European Cup in Monaco on March 4 the bookmakers will probably be taking no more bets on the likelihood of the Premiership title going to Old Trafford for the fifth time in six seasons. All United need to do between now and then is keep the home fires burning.

On Saturday this amounted to little more than a couple of prods with the poker. Why waste another log on a casually clearing station masquerading as a football team?

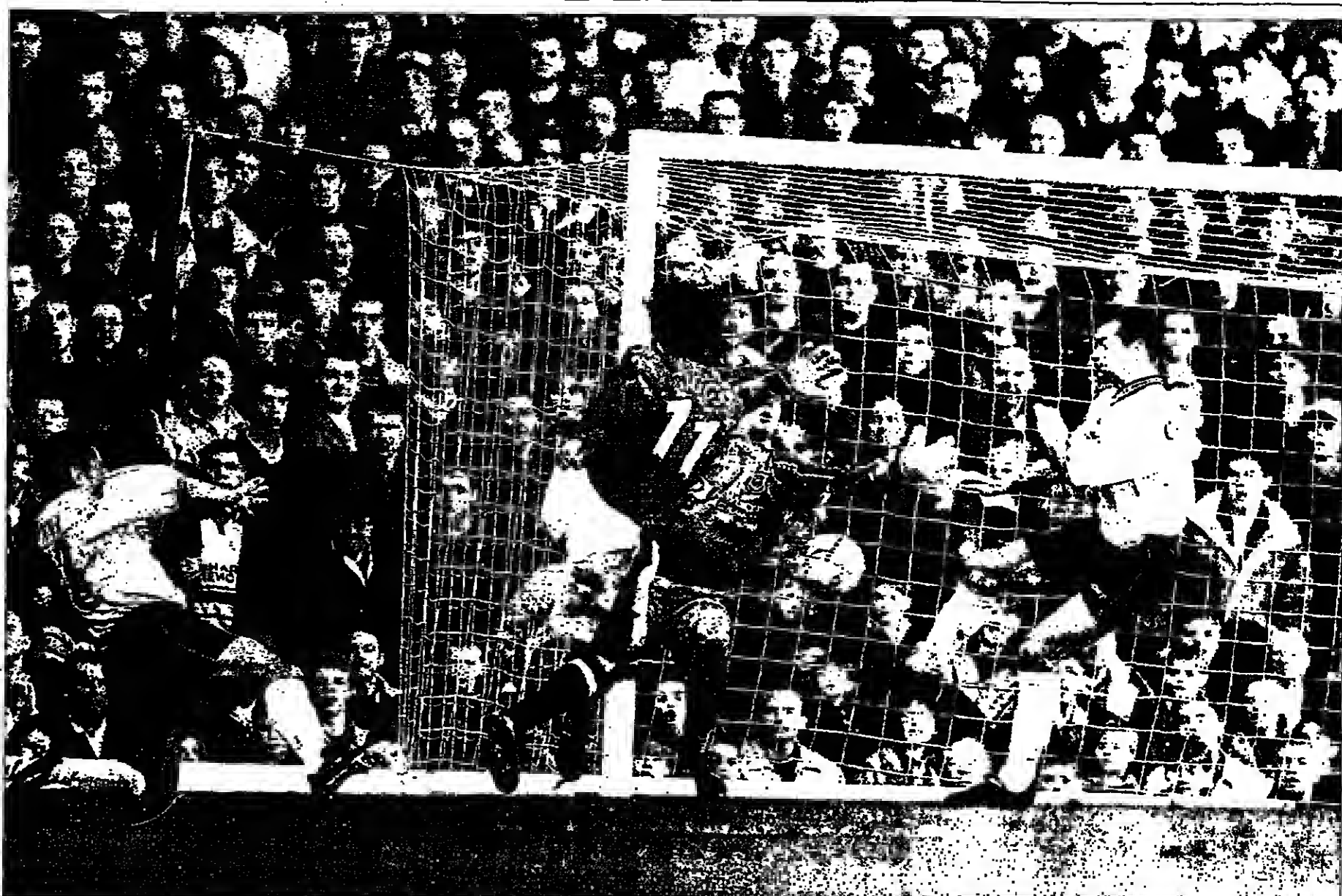
The Department for Education and Employment may have denied Christian Gross, the Swiss coach charged with the task of keeping Spurs up, the assistance of his physio at Grasshopper, Fritz Schmid,

but he might have had better luck with Baron Frankenstein, given White Hart Lane's present chronic shortage of spare parts.

For the rapidly diminishing number of teams still with a realistic chance of overtaking United, Saturday's low-key performance must have been as depressing as the awesome exhibition of attacking football which had overwhelmed Chelsea in the FA Cup six days earlier. If United can still win comfortably with so many of Alex Ferguson's players stuck in neutral, then what chance is there for anyone else?

So far the season has worked out much as Ferguson would have planned it. Since ensuring themselves a place in the Champions League quarter-finals his team have won six Premiership matches out of seven, a run which has included emphatic victories against two potential rivals, Blackburn Rovers and Liverpool.

For the moment United are catchable but coming fixtures suggest that this will soon be little more than an arithmetical



Pick that one out... Ryan Giggs pounces on the Tottenham goalkeeper Espen Baardsen's only serious error to power Manchester United into the lead at Old Trafford

cal hypothesis. Before meeting Monaco, United will play Southampton, Aston Villa and Chelsea away and Leicester, Bolton and Derby at home. If they emerge from these six games with fewer than 15 points it will be a surprise.

Not that United will get away with too many repetitions of Saturday's absenteeism. At the very least, a game which was redeemed only by a singular display of virtuosity from Ryan Giggs, who scored both goals and set up the possibility of several more with runs past defenders and imaginative passing.

Ferguson could afford to rest a slightly bruised Nicky Butt, the best player at Stamford Bridge in the Cup, switch Paul Scholes to the role of anchor man, move Giggs inside and give Ole Solbakshen match practice as a wide attacker without disturbing the burgeoning partnership of Teddy Sheringham and Andy Cole, and still win easily.

That Cole did not score was due largely to excellent goalkeeping by Espen Baardsen, the Norwegian alternative to the injured Ian Walker. Unhappily for Tottenham, Baardsen's only mistake cost them a goal on the stroke of

half-time when he failed to hold a centre from David Beckham in the face of Sheringham's routine challenge and allowed the ball to fall to Giggs, who drove it home.

Seven minutes past the hour another Beckham cross found Sol Campbell and Ramon Vega following Cole, leaving Giggs to score with a rare header. Earlier he had cleared a dangerous centre from Raul Fox with an even rarer header at the other end.

Ferguson has always believed Giggs would add things to his game but has probably not regarded him as an alternative to Gary Pallister.

If the winners were unremarkable, Giggs apart, the losers' performance had the grim fascination of a traffic accident. It would have been kinder to look the other way but the swiftness of the spectacle demanded attention.

Jürgen Klinsmann felt that the biggest difference between the teams lay in the amount of running United achieved off the ball. "In our team," he added, "the player in the worst situation was the man who had the ball because he did not know where to pass it." Klinsmann has not scored since returning to White Hart Lane a fortnight ago but net-

her has received the sort of service he needs. In an effort to give him better support Spurs have recruited the experienced but out-of-practice Nicola Bertl, an industrious midfielder with sound Italian technique from Internazionale. Bertl must be wondering what he has got himself into. On Saturday he looked like the hero in Day of the Triffids who recovers from an eye operation to find everyone else stumbling blindly around.

Had José Dominguez taken the opportunity he had helped to set up with Fox midway through the first half Tottenham might at least have persuaded United to find a higher gear. But Peter Schmeichel managed to touch the tiny Portuguese player's shot wide and the rest was down to Giggs.

Gross remains professionally optimistic about keeping Spurs in the Premiership but, as Klinsmann admitted: "We are in big, big trouble now."

Tottenham's next fixture is against West Ham at home, followed by visits to Derby, Blackburn and Sheffield Wednesday with an angst-ridden affair against Bolton at White Hart Lane on February 28. Troubled times indeed.

Chelsea 3, Coventry City 1

Gullit laughs off 'heavy mob' charge

Russell Thomas

GORDON Strachan blamed himself and — without identifying the referee — "another guy". Ruud Gullit praised himself and, much more fulsomely, his other substitute Mark Nicholls. Yet two and two often did not make four in this puzzling, fluctuating game.

At half-time it seemed that a newly confident, purposeful Coventry simply could not lose against a Chelsea side lacking both the attributes. Twenty-five minutes later the notion seemed absurd as Nicholls struck his second goal, the prelude to Roberto Di Matteo's swaggering, killing third.

Gullit and Strachan had, in managerspeak, "gone brave" after the interval to win the game. A tired, self-confessedly unfit Gullit wore a huge, relieved grin at full-time; Strachan had "egg on my face" for changing Coventry's shape and tactics.

Amid all this Mike Reed, in Strachan's eyes, played an influential part. The Birmingham referee maintained the highest Premiership booking average by brandishing five yellow cards — three to Coventry, two to Chelsea — and reached 50 in his 10th game.

Coventry's hyperactive manager was not pleased, at one point furiously kicking the ball away when Dion Dublin was cautioned

for a foul much less actionable than three unpunished Chelsea challenges on the surging Darren Huckerby down the near touchline.

Gullit's multi-national team have been labelled a lot of things but not, as Strachan implied, a heavy mob. Chelsea's manager almost collapsed with laughter at the suggestion. "That's the first time our team have been called physical," he said. "People have said we're not physical enough." Strachan had just spoken of a few Coventry players being "black and blue" and of Huckerby receiving "a lot of attention".

A fierce counter-claim eventually came from Gullit. "There was one tackle in midfield when a Coventry

player came in with two legs on Dennis [Wise]. Dennis went backwards, otherwise he would break his legs. Yet the referee gave no free-kick. The attempt should be punished."

Strachan utterly disagreed. "It was a great tackle. My man played the ball. Wise knew he wasn't going to win the ball. That's a first-time counter-attack, the on-field action came in sharp bursts. Huckerby had a goal puzzlingly disallowed before a duet of defensive howlers by Michael Derry and Danny Granville ushered in Paul Toller's soft, yet inevitable opening goal.

The managerial words became harsher at pitch-side. Gullit becoming almost as agitated as Strachan. Nicholls replaced Granville

for the second half, swiftly followed by Gullit's grand entrance as a striker at the expense of a subdued Gianfranco Zola. Not to be outdone, Strachan had just pitched in another multi-million foreigner, Romania's Viorel Moldovan, as Coventry also went for three forwards and three punts.

The 20-year-old Nicholls soon received an ear-bashing, Graeme Le Saux telling the midfielder "two minutes before my first goal to get into the box". One whiplash cross from the England wing-back brought Nicholls's header; a second, five minutes later, was met by a fine near-post volley. Di Matteo, completing a superb midfield performance,



Nicholls... breezy brace

ended a multi-pass movement by sweeping effortlessly into the far corner.

Coventry could not recover and Stamford Bridge, quiet for so long, bayed "Chelsea are back" after being shunted out of the FA Cup six days before. Gullit lapped it all up after his 32-minute effort but said: "I have to keep fit for moments like this but I don't think I will play from the start again."

Sheffield Wednesday 2, Newcastle 1

Dalglish glum as Atkinson slams the door

David Hopps

ANYBODY complaining about this match deserves to be imprisoned for life," pronounced Ron Atkinson as he revelled in the best that Sheffield Wednesday can muster. The verdict did seem a trifle harsh on Kenny Dalglish, even if it would spare Newcastle's manager a trip to Siena in the FA Cup.

Dalglish looked upon Wednesday's artistry with granite-faced gloom, as if watching through a tiny, iron-barred window. The sound of a door slamming shut was of one closing on Newcastle's season.

The perception a month ago was that Wednesday were plagued by the prospect of relegation while Newcastle's predicament was merely that of a potential Premiership challenger malfunctioning. Today they are together in mid-table on 26 points and William Hill have cut the odds against Newcastle being relegated from 50-1 to 16-1.

Dalglish's disturbing personal memories of the Heysel and Hillsborough tragedies must never be underplayed in considering Newcastle's shoddy attempts to force the switching of their FA Cup tie against Stevenage to St James' Park. But even his recognition cannot alter the overriding impression that Newcastle, and their manager, have mislaid their sense of footballing romance.

Certainly romance here was Wednesday's alone. Newcastle, disrupted by injury, seek to rectify their season with defensive organisation. Wednesday with élan. Wednesday's incessant flicks and feints, from the likes of Paulo Di Canio, Benito Carbone and Petter Rudi, brought Atkinson unbridled joy. Dalglish would have been more disposed to dwell upon the spurned chances, the three refused penalty claims, the disallowed goal.

Newcastle admit Cup-tie faults

THE Newcastle chairman Freddie Shepherd has admitted his club "made mistakes" in trying to have their FA Cup fourth-round tie shifted from the Conference side Stevenage's Broadhall Way ground. "Now we'll be playing the whole country on January

25 as well as Stevenage," said Shepherd, who nevertheless accused the Borough chairman Victor Green of breaching a promise to resolve the disagreement in private. He claimed: "Green said [to us], 'I'm going to milk this for all it's worth'."

Crystal Palace 1, Everton 3

Madar hastens the birth of Everton's minor miracle

John Duncan

SITTING among the Evertonians at Selhurst Park was something like being stuck in an open-air maternity hospital with 5,000 expectant fathers. Powerless, frustrated, nervous, the tension was so bad that even at 3-1 up, with only 120 seconds left, there was no nibbling of breath. Everton's little miracle has been a long time coming.

Everton have been here before. A basically talented team going nowhere in the early Eighties was transformed according to legend by one Kevin Brock back-pass at Oxford. Adrian Heath scored, saved Howard Kendall from the sack and the team learned to believe in themselves sufficiently for a mediocre outfit to become the best club side in Europe within 12 months.

So much for the legend. In fact Brock was not the midwife of Everton's Eighties rebirth. It was actually the signing of an unheralded foreigner, the Belgium-born last-ter-day Welshman Pat van den Hauwe, that shifted the balance of the side ever so slightly but ever so significantly, allowing the rest of the team to perform to their obvious ability. Michael Madar, on Saturday's showing, has a spookily familiar feel.

French he may be, Cantona he is not. Madar is a very English-looking centre-forward. A good strong target man, he holds the ball well, wins a good share of free kicks, finishes effectively and

simply put, most importantly, gives Everton a second option up front alongside Duncan Ferguson. The pair looked up yesterday as if to Le Manoir born. On the back of that Nick Barinby looked to have a new lease of life in a much better protected "hole" and Everton's youngsters seemed much less chafed about whacking aimless balls in the vague direction of Ferguson.

Someone also appears to have mentioned to Everton the possible benefits of crossing the ball with some accuracy. Ferguson got Everton's second goal with a towering eight-yard header over Andy Linighan from a Tony Thomas cross. Madar got the third from Tony Grant's diagonal cross, side-footed and half-volleyed home from six yards after Linighan watched the ball go over his and Ferguson's head.

But it was Everton's first that suggested they may have the good fortune to survive this season and prosper. A short pass was back-kicked through the legs of the hapless Linighan for Barinby to shoot home from 10 yards unmarked after three minutes. Linighan had a stinker. He should have given his match fee to the unpaid on-loan Tomas Brovik, who was Palace's only ray of hope in an otherwise dismal day. Terrible in defence, predictable in attack and clueless in midfield, Palace will have to do much better than this to survive. One suspects, however, that when they have completed their treatment from they have the quality to prosper.

West Ham United 6, Barnsley 0

Sore bottom after six of the best

Jon Brookin

DANNY WILSON proved that, just as dog owners often look like their pets, managers can begin to resemble their teams. After an afternoon on which it was virtually impossible to locate Barnsley's defence, Wilson did not try to find one for his side's embarrassing collapse.

"That was unacceptable," he said, presumably considering calling up some of George Bruto's local lady friends — pins in hands — to strengthen the defence for next weekend's game against Crystal Palace. "If we continue to play like that we'll be relegated."

It must have been little consolation to Wilson that he was hit afterwards by a wave of

sympathy as unrelenting as West Ham's attacks. Barry Redknapp in particular seemed gripped by the overwhelming, almost patronising, affection which "plucky little" Barnsley's struggle has inspired.

"I really hope they pull out," West Ham's manager said. "They've done terrific. They've got great fans and I hope today's result doesn't knock them too far back."

Frank Lampard agreed, although it was he who spoiled Barnsley's entrance to the Premiership in August by scoring the winner at Oakwell and ushered them towards the exit on Saturday by scoring after five minutes. "I'd love to see them stay up," he said. "They're what football's all about. They've got no money but they've got

a lot of grit and determination. If they can survive, it will give a lift to all the so-called lower clubs that they can get into the Premier League and stay there."

This shambling display was hardly encouraging. Barnsley were admittedly short of two defenders through suspension but it was no so much individual players they needed as a reinforced steel wall across their box.

Samassi Abou, ably supported by Eyal Berkovic, was their principal tormenter. The former Cannes striker has difficulty communicating off the pitch. "He don't speak no English," Redknapp revealed — but has struck up an understanding on it.

The 24-year-old scored each side of half-time and set up

John Moncur and John Hartson with delicate touches before Stan Lazaridis completed West Ham's ninth home victory in 10 Premiership matches in the final minute.

"I've got a good young team with great enthusiasm," Redknapp said. "It's nice to be in charge of young players who want to learn rather than soured old ones who think they know all the answers."

Wilson was left to try to find signs of salvation from the wreckage of a three-match unbeaten run. "We've been doing really well recently and then to put in a performance like that proves all the pundits right that say we are going to get relegated," he said.

On this showing, certainly, they have not a dog's chance whoever it looks like.

Bolton Wanderers 0, Southampton 0

Benali joins departed but chances are not being buried

Derek Potter

SENDINGS-OFF are 10 a penny at the Reebok Stadium this season. With a duck of his hand Francis Benali made a premature exit for the 10th time in his career and became the sixth player to be dismissed at Bolton's new home.

Goals, however, do not come so easily and last season's happy Wanderers are now battling to stay in the Premiership. Only 16 have been scored in this ground in 11 league games, six in extra time

against Derby County, and only seven have been conceded by Bolton at home, underlining the merit of Southampton's sixth away point.

Matthew Le Tissier set up happily on the bench a few yards from Peter Beardsley, whose wizardry might have created the goal that cruelly eluded Bolton. Both looked out of sorts with the management. Carlton Palmer was very much on the pitch, felled by Andy Todd's exuberant tackle, but the referee Gary Willard decided against a penalty. Thirteen minutes later

Benali was sent off after a minor brush with Jamie Pollock and Southampton were forced to abandon their attacking format.

Despite injuries, suspensions and sheer bad luck, Colin Todd, the still thach-haired Bolton manager, insists they can survive a relegation struggle he believes will involve at least eight teams, including Newcastle United who are next on his testing list of fixtures.

"Keep smiling through just like you always do," he said. Southampton's goalkeeper

Paul Jones made stunning saves from Richard Dryden, Andy Todd and Neil Cox to inspire a comeback.

Jason Dodd cleared a Todd header off the line. Alan Thompson hit an upright and Bob Taylor, on a month's loan from West Bromwich Albion, fluffed a simple chance inside the first minute of his debut and later hit the crossbar after Jones spilled a cross by Thompson. It was never going to be Bolton's day.

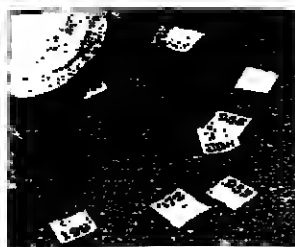
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The big con
Paul Haywood on the heavyweight title shambles
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The Guardian Sport

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Premiership

Derby County 3, Blackburn Rovers 1

Derby hit the high notes



Tonch of magic... Wanchope fires the third goal past Flowers yesterday after the Costa Rican's trickery had bamboozled the Blackburn defenders

PHOTOGRAPH: SHAUN BOTTERELL

Wanchope leads chorus in a command performance

Michael Walker

PLAYING at home while performing like an away team is not a trick for which even a managerial magician such as Tim Smith is renowned. But Smith somehow conjured it from Derby County yesterday.

Blackburn Rovers dictated the match from the start but by the final whistle two fortuitous goals from Dean Sturridge and a third from Paulo Wanchope amid some poor defending three minutes from time ensured that Derby plucked three points from the hat that lifted them into sixth place above Leeds United and towards a Uefa Cup spot.

Rovers, for whom Chris Sutton scored his 14th of the season to raise his side's spirits just before Derby's third, remain a point behind Chelsea and there is no denying the greatest beneficiaries of this result — Manchester United, who maintained the seven-point lead at the top they secured by beating Tot-

tenham Hotspur at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Roy Hodgson was more concerned about Blackburn's defensive failings than the title race. "While hope exists we will continue to live in hope, but we committed two bad errors and we didn't take our chances today," the manager said. "I don't think we played badly but we got beaten. These things happen in football."

Asked if he thought County could win a Uefa Cup spot, Hodgson replied: "Why not?" As for Derby, he remained unbeaten at home they have a platform from which to leap into Europe but Smith desperately wants valuable players such as Stefano Eranio and Lee Carsley back in the side before talking about the Uefa Cup. But at least he admitted: "It's a nice feeling to be sixth in the table."

In his programme notes he had complained about "battering" opposition at home but not scoring, but he was wise enough to recognise that this was not the case yesterday. "We were a bit fortunate," he said.

From the beginning Black-

burn looked the brighter side and Mart Poom in the Derby goal produced two alert stops in the opening five minutes. Only 90 seconds had elapsed when Kevin Gallacher and Sutton combined to slice Derby open and Poom did well to stand his ground and parry Kevin Gallacher's shot around a post.

Then, after Sutton had flicked on a Damien Duff free-kick, Poom again impressed in ushering away Colin Hendry's header. For a team with three centre-backs of the stature of Igor Stimac, Dean Yates and Steve Elliott, Derby were looking remarkably meek.

This set something of a pattern for the whole game, although one important change ultimately altered the outcome in Derby's favour. Smith and his assistant Steve McClaren should take credit, as it was their verbal intervention, haranguing each and every one in a white shirt after barely 10 minutes, which brought a switch in attitude. Suddenly the Rams stopped playing like sheep and, crucially, started winning tackles.

Given possession, it is no secret that Francesco Balano, Wanchope and Sturridge can create havoc and Sturridge moved forward with the slick cohesion that is their trademark under Smith. They were two up before the half-time whistle.

Nevertheless, Blackburn were hardly shredded in the process and if there was an element of offside about Derby's first, there was a definite deflection on the second. Both goals had a common characteristic in that they came from incisive Rovers clearances.

Jonathan Hunt won a crucial header after Stephane Henchoz could knock the ball only 10 yards outside the Blackburn area. When the ball came down from Hunt's

head Wanchope swung a deceptive leg at it and in so doing left the Rovers defence bamboozled and square. Sturridge ran on to the ball from what looked to be an offside position and walloped it mercilessly past Tim Flowers with 15 minutes gone.

Blackburn resumed their territorial domination but four minutes before the interval another poor piece of defending, this time by Gary Croft, gifted the ball to Balano. The Italian wasted no time in supplying Sturridge, but Flowers would surely have saved his shot had not Hendry's head diverted the ball inside the near post.

The script was much the same in the second half, with Gerry Fittcroft putting in two useful shots, the second acrobatically palmed to safety by Poom. Sutton having a muscular header blocked and Henchoz providing one of the misses of the season after 64 minutes when, unmarked, he volleyed over from six yards.

A goal then and a 2-2 draw would have been a likely final score, but instead Rovers had to wait until four minutes from the end when Fittcroft delivered a delicate pass to end an unseemly scramble from a corner. Sutton met it with a powerful header that even Poom could not get near.

Even with so little time remaining the Blackburn fans must have hoped for an equaliser, but instead they had to

suffer Derby's third. Wanchope had produced one of his sporadically intelligent afternoons that so frustrate his manager, but when an awkward ball began bouncing in the Rovers penalty area only he had the unique skills necessary to control it, nudge it and then volley it in. Just like that.

Call for ban over ear biting

Robert Kitson on a Tetley's Bitter Cup rugby tie that left one player in hospital

LONDON Scottish are demanding that the Bath player who bit their flanker Simon Fenn during Saturday's Tetley's Bitter Cup tie is identified, banned for a minimum of 12 months, and made to pay compensation both to them and to Fenn.

Fenn, a 26-year-old from Sydney who was making his first team debut for Scottish and returned to the field after the incident with his head bandaged, underwent plastic surgery in a Southampton hospital yesterday. So far, he has had more than 25 stitches inserted into the lower part of his left ear, and may also need a skin graft.

London Scottish yesterday issued a statement reading: "We are disappointed that no Bath player has yet been willing to admit responsibility for the incident."

"Simon Fenn must reserve his position until the extent of damage to his ear is fully determined. Simon's main concern for a rapid recovery is the risk of infection due to the injury being caused by a bite."

"We understand that Bath are seeking to complete their own internal inquiry as soon as possible, and hopefully find the player responsible and prepare the appropriate punishment."

"We would expect a lengthy ban or suspension for a minimum of 12 months, with financial compensation both to the club and player."

"Knowing the tradition of Bath, we remain hopeful that

they will react responsibly for this incident."

Bath's chief executive Tony Swift responded: "We will carry out an investigation into an alleged incident during the game, but I am not making any further comment."

The coach Andy Robinson, who took more than two hours to emerge from the Bath dressing-room following his team's injury-time escape, repeatedly ignored questions about the incident.

But from the moment that Fenn reeled away from a collapsed scrum late in the first-half with blood dripping from his left ear, it was clear that the appetite of one of Robinson's players for victory had lurches over acceptable boundaries. Bath won the tie 24-23.

No one, least of all the referee Ashley Rowden, was in any doubt what had happened to Fenn. "I have never experienced anything like it. There was no way it was a boot because there was a bit taken out of his teeth," said Rowden. "It was similar to the Holyfield incident with Mike Tyson but I couldn't send off anyone who I hadn't seen do it. I remember him saying 'I've been bitten'."

The Berkshire official warned the Bath captain Andy Nicol during the game of the consequences of any repeat. But, with his touch-judge also un-sighted, could do no more than award the visitors a penalty.

"The Scottish players were saying 'It'll be on the video' but because it was on the far side I doubt it," said Rowden.

Manic moments

Richard Sharpe: Lions v Northern Transvaal, June 1962

The England fly-half was held down by one opponent while the flanker Francois Roux launched a flying tackle which left Sharpe with a broken jaw. Roux remained on the field.

Offie Waldrons: Oxford University v Australians, October 1966

The first major ear-biting allegation. Oxford's prop was bitten by his opposite number Ross Cullen after a scrum. Cullen was sent home.

Neel Murphy: Wales v Ireland, March 1969

The Ireland flanker was possessed by a right hook from the Wales captain Brian Price who was not sent off. The Scottish referee Doug McMillan explained: "Players do get excited."

Jeff Youngs: New Zealand v Wales, May 1969

The Wales hooker's jaw was broken after being thumped by Colin Meads for pulling the Kiwi's jersey once too often. The referee Pat Murphy missed the incident. The penalty went to New Zealand.

Graham Price: Australia v Wales, June 1978

The Wales prop had his jaw broken in several places after being punched from behind by his opposite number Steve Fennane. The Australian never played for his country again. Price was forced to eat fish and chips from a liquidiser for months.

Paul Ackford: England v Argentina, November 1990

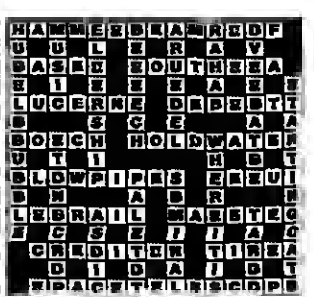
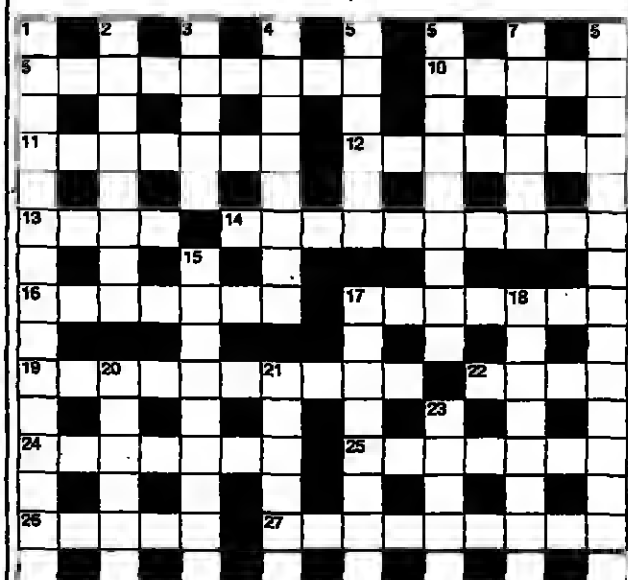
Argentina's then 18-year-old prop, Federico Mendez objected to having his bags snatched and swung out blindly in retribution flooring the innocent Ackford.

Sean Fitzpatrick: New Zealand v South Africa, July 1994

The New Zealand skipper had his ear bitten by the South African prop Johan le Roux who was cited and banned for 19 months.

Guardian Crossword No 21,169

Set by Rufus



WINNERS OF PRIZE PUZZLE 21,169
This week's winners of a Collins English Dictionary are Michael Bulley of Ayrfield, Kent, Andy Billings of Crosby, Liverpool, G P Jellies of St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex, Dr A Tibbott of Pulborough, West Sussex, and P Bennett of Leeds.

Across

- 9 Missile base and plant (8)
- 10 Works in the music business (5)
- 11 Ill-starred men of commerce (7)
- 12 Diana's a girl cashier (7)
- 13 Close in and attack (4)
- 14 To a Persian it could be a parting of the ways (10)
- 16 Anonymous nun made to change order (7)
- 17 New pop C.D. — free! (7)
- 19 Craft associations (5-5)
- 22 Ground needed for play (4)
- 24 Add to the general confusion (7)
- 26 Country ruler in new aile (7)
- 26 Lash out, take in a foreign capital (5)
- 27 Architect's work bringing a peerage? (9)

Down

- 1 May be seen and heard in a Kentish garden (10,5)
- 2 Production of Haydn's oratorio (8)
- 3 Man of property, three quarters in gold (5)
- 4 Gets more than one's share of froth on top with this measure of alcohol (8)
- 5 A way to lift opera in large arenas (6)
- 6 Painter of some force? (9)
- 7 A sign, say, to jack up the car (6)
- 8 You won't have any truck with these (9,6)
- 15 Port for mother after morning rest, perhaps (9)
- 17 Rose, a lovely girl in crimson (8)
- 18 Being so one may react

rashly with unusual ill-grace (8)

- 20 Appropriate piece of neckwear (8)
- 21 Sound conductor of German songs (8)
- 23 A lighthouse casts it across the vessel (5)

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A sport conning itself to death

Paul Hayward

ONE July morning in the post-moral metropolis of Las Vegas an envelope will land on the desk of Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission. Inside will be a request from a local resident to have his boxing licence returned. And with the knifing open of that letter from Mike Tyson a \$100 million travesty will begin to form in neon.

If you want to understand

why the Lennox Lewis-Evander Holyfield fight collapsed — the one that would have created an undisputed world heavyweight champion — consider this from Don King's former publicity director Mike Marley. "We're not talking about sport, we're talking about the pay-per-view industry. Sportswriters and punters like the idea of unification, but the champion is whoever draws the most at the pay-per-view window. And right now that champion is Tyson. It's the only title he's got left."

This could be the year when

the world gives up on heavyweight boxing and, paradoxically, the year of the biggest grossing fight in history, the year when the violent trade graced by Muhammad Ali climbs into a pit and never gets back out. "Tyson-Holyfield III will be the biggest freak show since Woodstock," says Marley, who recently broke away from King after five years to resume his own promotional career. "You'll have people who have never watched a fight — and will probably never watch another one — paying to see it. I'd say

it's automatic that Tyson will be re-licensed in July and start fighting again soon after."

Fighting or biting, nobody can be sure. Whatever, with Lewis, the World Boxing Council champion, confined to a ringside seat, the heavyweight game's already wounded credibility could require the attention of a priest. Holyfield, the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation champion, whose acquiescent zeal almost matches his violent capacities in the ring, says he backed out of a unification bout with Lewis because

the dollars were stacked too low. The logic underpinning that decision is easy to spot: why should Tyson's conqueror risk his belt, his health and his mystique against Lewis when he can profit from his own disfigurement last June in what, according to Marley, will be sold as "Scream II"?

Tyson-Holyfield III will be the bearded lady with box office. The six months since Tyson viciously assaulted Holyfield's ears has already bought a lot of amnesia, as all those pug-faced cynics said it would.

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